

THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY №33 60p/\$2.00

STARBURST

CRONENBERG'S SCANNERS

WE REVIEW THE NEW SF MOVIE FROM CANADA'S KING OF HORROR

MARGOT KIDDER SPEAKS OUT!

A CONTROVERSIAL CONVERSATION WITH SUPERMAN'S LOIS LANE

THE FANTASTIC BOND MOVIES

A HISTORY OF BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE SECRET AGENT

THE MONSTER MAKEUP WIZARD

ROY ASHTON REVEALS TRADE SECRETS IN A CANDID INTERVIEW

PLUS: POPEYE THE MOVIE,
INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN,
THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)



WE LOOK BACK AT THE 1937 CLASSIC
**SNOW WHITE AND
THE SEVEN DWARFS**



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SHRINKING WOMAN
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 Distribution: (Unlabeled)

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Volume 3, Number 9
 Publisher: Stan Lee

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STARBURST LETTERS

APOLOGY

Due to an oversight on my part, a remark was made on the letters page of Starburst 32 that shouldn't have passed unanswered. Our correspondent Mark Marmor, in his attack on John Brosnan's review of *The Final Count-down* (Starburst 24) wrote: "I feel that Mr Brosnan's review was extremely out of line, and looks as if it has been copied almost word for word from an American review."

Now, Mark Marmor is entitled to his opinions of John Brosnan's work. He is even entitled — to a certain extent — to make his opinions known via the letters page of Starburst. What he is not entitled to do is to accuse John Brosnan proudly of copying the work of others, and passing it off as his own.

I apologise personally and professionally to John Brosnan for letting such a serious accusation go unanswered.

Alan McKenzie,
Editor, Starburst.

BROSINAN FAN

I presume that John Brosnan has a brain; if so, one can only deplore the paucity of its use. *It's Only A Movie?* "Duh!" indeed! Does Mr Brosnan really believe that movies do not have the power to influence people's thinking? If so, I suggest that he gets out of the business of film criticism, which must, therefore, be a pretty pointless activity, and do something useful instead, like whale-gutting. Mr Brosnan's premise that violent films do not induce violence is trash. Observe, for example, the kids in the park or playground acting out their favourite heroes... the fist is mightier than the thought. Now admittedly, in an adult context, I might not be persuaded to commit a criminal act by watching a film; but some one with such tendencies might. And if just one person is harmed because of such a film, is it worth it? The answer of the big business

guys is, of course, obvious.

As for Mr Brosnan's attack on the Vincent article, it seems rather illogical. Quote from Vincent: "We see her vulnerable back, pick up her nervous tension", etc. Just because your critic is not affected by the scene doesn't mean that everyone else is not. So what if it's an old cinematic play? Since when did something being old make it ineffective — or right? And as for the critics he quotes, how can a film built around the slaughter of women be regarded as showing a "tender regard for their vulnerability"? Do we really want to hear such patronising clap-trap?

Finally, this sudden upsurge of films showing violence against women shows a very distasteful trend in our society. Could it possibly represent a rather infantile backlash against the supposedly increasing independence of women? To ignore all this, as your critic most certainly does, using the touchstone of "mob censorship" to defend and justify himself, is the action of a fool.

I suggest John Brosnan seek an immediate moral lobotomy; he's obviously in more urgent need of surgery than Angie Dickinson.

Paul Divine,
Westcliff-on-Sea,
Essex.

John Brosnan replies: "With all due respect to Mr Divine I suggest he go and reread my two columns relating to violence against women in films as it's obvious he seems to have missed the point. In fact he has missed every point I was trying to make (though perhaps that's my fault). I didn't for a moment suggest that movies don't influence people — I'm sure they do — but the whole question of whether they influence people to the extent where they commit violence is still open to debate and my point was to ask where to draw the line with censorship if this is indeed the case. Mr Divine, of course, doubts if he personally would be persuaded to commit a criminal act by watching a film but is worried about those lesser mortals among us who might be.

This argument is always trotted out by the pro-censorship lobby — it's always other people who need to be protected. . .

"The whole point of my two pieces was not to defend the movies themselves but to query the interpretation being placed on them by the feminists. I was trying to suggest that this interpretation, which claims that such movies represent an incitement to sexual hatred, a male backlash against the Women's Movement, an incitement to commit rape and murder etc, may be somewhat incorrect and may be the result of a misguided emotional response rather than one based on reason. It's my belief that one can interpret movies like *Dressed To Kill*, *He Knows You're Alone* and *When A Stranger Calls* etc as being pro-women movies and that such an interpretation would be as equally valid as the feminist one (eg, surely the message of *He Knows You're Alone* is that no man can be trusted, an integral part of feminist dogma). I quoted the extract from the Vincent article to show how her personal bias against the movie, or against what she thought the movie was about, influenced the way she interpreted what she saw on the screen.

"What it all boils down to is that I find it alarming when pressure groups, of any kind, start claiming that their particular interpretation of a movie, or group of movies, is the only correct one and that everyone else must comply with this interpretation. I also think that such people tend to assume that movies about unpleasant things are automatically advocating such things, an idea which would put severe restrictions on all film makers if it became generally accepted. . .

"But enough of this for the time being (I'm sure the debate will continue). I'm off to do a bit of serious whale-gutting before I check in for my moral lobotomy."

DEAR IAN COVELL...

It is evident to me that your correspondent Ian Covell (Starburst Letters, Starburst 30) com-

pletely misunderstood the interview with Paul Darrow in Starburst 28. If he had read it properly he would have seen that Mr Darrow recalled the incident with the two boys to underline the perceptive nature of children as regards television plots. It was this perceptiveness that made him laugh, not the fact that the girl was killed.

Either Ian Covell has a remarkable penchant for misinterpretation or he didn't see the episode in question.

Avon learns that Anna has betrayed him so in his grief he turns away, the girl pulls a blaster and aims it at his back. At this point someone shouts to Avon, he turns, sees the girl is about to kill him and shoots her.

He is grief-stricken that the girl he loved let him down so badly. It is one of the most poignant scenes I've ever witnessed on the screen.

Lastly, whatever you misguidedly think about Avon, you have no business intimating that Paul styles himself on the character he plays, or that he's some kind of mecha loner.

It's obvious that you've never met Paul Darrow, but I guarantee that two minutes in the presence of this thoroughly charming man will leave you feeling like a louse.

Heather Luhman,
Ashford,
Middlesex.

As a loyal Starburst fan, I would like to ask just three questions.

1) Can anybody explain in plain and simple terms what the hell Ian Covell of Middlesbrough is going on about in Starburst 30 and is he watching the same programmes as me?

2) Why waste valuable space printing such drivel? That space could have been taken up with a picture of Jenne.

3) When is Blake's 7 coming back?

Cliff Childs,
East Barnet,
Herts.

To answer your questions: 1) This sounds like a rhetorical question to us! 2) We printed the letter because the philosophy of Star-

burst is that every reader is entitled to make his or her opinion known, within the obvious limits of the space available and 3) We do know that the fourth series is recording even as this is being written, but details on the airing are hazy. More information in our interview with the new *Bleke's 7* producer Vere Lammier, tentatively scheduled for Starburst 35.

I think that it is Ian Collie who has a "slight imbalance" in his views — his obnoxious and vicious personal attack on Paul Darrow sickened me. Is it beyond his comprehension to realize that Avon is a character and that Paul Darrow is an actor? Although characters are only given "life" through acting, on the most basic level their actions are dictated by the script and the director. Any artist is linked with their creation

— but they are not the same entity.

It is a tribute to the excellence of Paul Darrow's acting that Avon is read enough for Ian Collie to despise; but I find it sinister that Ian seems unable to distinguish between fantasy and the parallel universe of reality.

Besides, has he actually watched *Bleke's 7*? There have been many subtle signs that Avon is far more than what he terms the "repressed/pragmatic/murderous/bastard". The first example that I can think of is the exquisitely beautiful episode *Deliverance* from the first series (a story which was crucified in the Trevor Hoyle "novellisation") there was sensitivity and yes Ian, "tenderness" in Avon's treatment of Megat in *Avon's* had only bothered to look.

Kathy Howe,
 Worcester,
 Hereford & Worcestershire.

DOCTOR WHO CONTROVERSY

I read with surprise Bill Scully's letter in Starburst 31 regarding the new format Doctor Who. Not at the fact that he was saddened at the loss of Tom Baker — I was too.

In fact Tom was my favourite Doctor.

Neither was I surprised that he was upset at the departure of Romana and K-9. So was I.

No. What surprised me was his anger at the introduction of "The boy and two girl assistants." (His words, not mine.) Mett, Sarah, and Janet have all taken to their parts supremely well and should receive credit as having done so.

In this respect Mr Scully hasn't got a case.

To take up one of his other points; DK, so Peter Davison wasn't on Mr Scully's list of possible Doctors.

So what? Casting my mind back to 1974, Tom Baker wasn't on mine!

The transition period between Doctors is a sticky one, and the last thing the production team needs is stabbing in the back.

John Nathan-Turner and the crew will continue to have the full support of Doctor Who fans during this period.

After all, isn't that what it's all about?

Martin Kelsey,
 Market Harborough,
 Leics.

In reference to the letter by Mr Bill Scully in Starburst 31 about Doctor Who, I would like to agree wholeheartedly with what he said about John Nathan-Turner's choice for the new Doctor — Peter Davison. I too was totally shocked and dismayed when the news was announced, having considered it a foregone conclusion that the new Doctor would be an older actor, somewhat like William Hartnell. I think Geoffrey Bayldon would have been the best choice, but when Peter Davison's appointment was announced my faith in the programme was totally shattered.

Once I was a dedicated fan

who wrote a synopsis of every episode and enjoyed being a member of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society (DWAS), but now I make a point of not watching the programme, and, although I do not blame the DWAS for the choice I will not be rejoining the Society this year. Those are my feelings on the subject, but I hope, for the programme's sake, other disheartened fans do not think the same way as me.

By the way, on a more cheerful note, can you tell me whether the toy monkey on the poster of The Attic on page 15 of Starburst 31 is the same one that Barry Guiler had in *Close Encounters*? I think it looks like it!

Paul C. Ottaway,
 Devizes,
 Wilts.

SWEDISH SF GAMES

How can you publish an interview with Sybil Denning (Starburst 31) without mentioning her long career as an actress in soft core porno? When I was a full-time critic in the early 70s a month would rarely go by without a new Sybill (sic) Denning sex film coming up for review. How well I remember titles like *Loves of a French Pussy*, *Swedish Love Games* and *Passion Pill Swingers*. No doubt Miss Denning does not care to be reminded of these films, and I feel a spoil-sport for mentioning them. But facts are facts.

David McGillivray,
 London.



Above: The very lovely Sybil (is it Sybill?) Denning as she appeared in *Battle Beyond the Stars*. See letter from script-writer David McGillivray, titled "Swedish SF Games".

Published monthly by Marvel Comics Ltd, Jadin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5, England. All photographic material is copyright © BBC, NBC, ABC, CBS, ITN, IFA, Columbia, New Haven, Rank, Twentieth Century-Fox, Universal Artists, Warner Bros, Hammer, Columbia, Walt Disney Productions, Time Studios, GIC, EMI, MGM, MCA-Universal (unless otherwise stated) and appears with their kind permission. All remaining material is copyright © 1987 Marvel Comics Ltd, a subsidiary of Cadence Industries. Starburst is a trademark and trademark of Marvel Comics Ltd. While contributions are encouraged, the publisher cannot be held responsible for unsolicited manuscripts and photos. All letters sent to Starburst will be considered for publication. For display advertising contact: Jane McInerney, SVI Space Sales & Marketing, 6 Brompton Road, London W1T, England. 01-582-2012. Printed in the United Kingdom.

THINGS TO COME

SCIENCE FICTION COMES OF AGE

Ever since George Lucas unfurled *Star Wars* in 1977 and made cine-science fiction respectable again, or what's rather more to the point, proved it could be financially successful, we've all been waiting for a real sf boom. A boom of true science fiction, designed to stir the mind as well as the adrenalin. Instead of which all we've had is a succession of space westerns or space-horror. A continuation, in fact, of the Lucas-type fantasies but nothing to match the grand-daddy of the current vogue, 2001.

So where do we look to find intelligent science fiction...? France could be the answer. This year, French directors are nearly all scrambling aboard the sf bandwagon — and I do mean *true* sf.

French audiences have proved as insatiable as the rest of the world where last year's genre films were concerned. The Empire Strikes Back made sixth spot in last year's *Top Fifty* in Paris. The lone French sf entry, Bertrand Tavernier's excellent *Death Watch* (as yet unseen in the UK), hit the 35th spot. Low or not, several French projects now or soon to be before the cameras are following Tavernier's lead rather than Lucas'.

I've already reported *First issue — Editor!* the million-dollar Meyday, being produced by Alain Schlockoff, organizer of the Perls sf end fantasy festival. Now I've aery news of other French sf treats afoot. Roman Polanski's usual scripter, Gerard Brach (Rapulison, etc) has completed adapting *Quest for Fire*, as a Franco-Canadian co-production. This is a prehistoric epic to be shot by Jean-Jacques Annaud in Karys, France, Amalife, and Scotland (where Tavernier made most of *Death Watch*). The film has a cast of unknowns. The real star is the author of the original book — Frank J.H. Rosney is hailed as the new Jules Verne in France.

Actor-turned-director Jean-Pierre Mocky is working on *The Face Snatchers*, a supernatural

thriller, co-written with Paris film critic Jean-Claude Romer and New York sf writer Scott Baker. Britain owns a slice of his one, as it's a Franco-Belgian-English co-production, being shot in the Belgian Ardennes mountains, Paris and back to Tavernier location country, Edinburgh. Mocky himself heads the cast as a geologist who refuses to believe in the supernatural until...

Polish expatriate Walerian Borowczyk, a former painter, illustrator and designer, is renowned around the globe for his fantastic French films. Now he's into *fantastique* as well with his version of how (he says) Robert Louis Stevenson really wrote his *Jekyll/Hyde* classic. Boro calls it *Dr Jekyll and Miss Osbourne*, and both he and I will be telling you more of this one in a later issue. I've been watching Boro edit the film and it is, in a word — *a-maz-ing!* Udo Kier plays Dr J, which means the young (or young-looking; he's ageless) German actor has now played the lot. He was in Andy Warhol's (disappointing) *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, and turned up as Jack The Ripper in Boro's last film, a German version of the old

Lulu classic.

Among the more famous French directors moving into sf is Claude Chabrol, one of the instigators of the 50s' new-wave of directors, along with Truffaut and the rest. He's finished scripting *Eight Days Elsewhere* with his old-time partner, Paul Gageuff and is, alas, having some difficulty in raising the necessary budget for this allegedly true tale of a young man kidnapped by the occupants of a flying saucer...

Ster animator Rene Lefoux, fondly remembered for his *Fantastic Planet* feature, is still working on *Gendahar* vs *The Metal Warriors* (we had exclusive colour shots of this in *Starburst* as far back as issue 14). Rene is also also preparing another, *The Orphan of Perdide* from the novel by Stefan Wul, a French sf writer. British television incidentally, has invested some loot into his *Gendahar* film...

Other projects worth keeping an eye out for (so I will, and report more fully anon) include Jean-Etienne Sirey and Raphael Delpeard's *Nuit de la Mort/Night of the Dead*... and Jean Rollin's new vampire picture. Rollin has made about thirty movies inside 24 years, and more than half have the word 'vampire' in the title. With the (French) accent on vamp!

The most important of this sudden French sf rush is director Christian de Chalonge's version of Robert Merle's book, *Malevil*. The subject? Life after the bomb. The stars include Michel Serrault, the one in drag in *La Cage aux Folles*, singer-actor Jacques Dutronc, excellent comic Jacques Villeret, and the one star who makes any French film worth the viewing, Jean-Louis Trintignant. Apart from most of the cast having beards, this film is still shrouded in secrecy — and is tipped to be the major French entry at the Cannes festival in May. From the little I've seen and heard, it sounds the kind of sf we've been waiting for. Forget the hardware, the lasers and the guys intoning threats behind breathing masks. This one's about what most good sf is about. The future. And people. Not just machines.

EMPIRE COMEDY

Now, please, please, before any readers begin attacking me — a la John Brosnan — for describing George Lucas' films, above, as less than thought-provoking or indeed, non-intellectual, perhaps you should listen to George himself. Because here's a funny thing... The Empire Strikes Back has been nominated for the Hollywood Writer's Guild award



THE COMING OF CONAN

Whisper it do, but the long-promised Conan movie is finally before John Milius' cameras. Shooting started, in the greatest secrecy, and about one month ahead of time, in Spain (and not West Germany) in January. Arnold Schwarzenegger is still playing the lead role (well, he's waited long enough and kept all those muscles in trim for it, burnishing his muscle-bound acting talent in his Villain Western and a Jayne Mansfield biopic for US-tv). His co-stars include James Earl Jones, the voice of Darth Vader (but not of Thapir in BBC Radio 4's *Erebus* search, though Sean Probst did his best to sound like him) and Flash Gordon's priceless Ming, Max von Sydow. Max's casting is hardly a surprise as the Conan movie is now being



Compiled by Tony Crawley

as a 'comedy, based on material from another medium,' alongside such unimpeachable comedies as *Airplane* and *Cheech and Chong's Next Movie*. Before you think the Writers' Guild is extracting the michael out of George (or rather Lerry Kaden and the late Leigh Brackett's script), you should understand that the film has been nominated in this category — at the request of George Lucas, himself!



produced by a certain Dino de Laurentiis... in partnership with his daughter Raffaella and Buzz Feitshaus.

CRONENBERG'S REVENGE

David Cronenberg has finally made it! His new movie, *Scanners* — turned down by Roger Corman ten years ago — has been beating everything else out of sight in America in recent months. But don't expect Canada to lose him now to Hollywood. He's staying in Toronto for his next feature — *Videodrome* — and has a deal promising him backing of anything he wants to make thereafter, at no more than 7-million dollars a throw. As far as Cronenberg is concerned then, he plainly doesn't need Hollywood. And certainly not now that it needs him. Hollywood certainly

LATE SHOW

The midnight movie business, usually brimming with fantasy films, is still doing wonders in the United States. Every Friday and Saturday nights they pull in more than a million people. The Rocky Horror Picture Show is still the king of the midnight shows. It's made so much extra profit from such screenings that one company, Filmways (AIP that was) has now opened a special department to deal with midnight specials across the land. A certain

Steve Caplan is in charge. He chooses such bills as *Teles From The Crypt*, *The Incredible Melting Man* and *They Came From Within* (aka *Shivers*) — and advertises them as "Monster Mayhem at Midnight". From its newly taken over AIP catalogue, Filmways also supply a "Meen Cycle Madness" bunch — *Mad Max*, *Wild Angels*, *Chrome* and *Hot Leather* and such like. Another winning formula is black films — *The Mask*, *Youngblood* and, obviously, *Blacula*. Caplan's next plan is what I suppose will be weekend

mid-day screenings, rather more juvenilia items like double bills of *Frogs* and *Meteor*. Other companies are noting Filmways' success and I'm sure the midnight notion will be taken up more fully in Britain soon, too. Most of the movies chosen are already written off as dead, or close to it, by most cine owners and often enough, the distributors, too. But in a hot weekend in a cold month, two 12pm screenings can generate more loot than the same theatre's full week with some overly hyped new release.

didn't want him when he needed it... which makes *Scanners*' success all the sweeter. Like revenge.

For now it can be told... Having compiled his first two underground cult hits, *Stereos* and *Crimes of the Future*, Cronenberg extended the latter into something he called *Telapathy 2000* in 1970. "I sent it to Corman, but I got no response." In 1971, he tried again when visiting Los Angeles for the first time, to raise some cash for *Shivers*. He got the cold shoulder from every company in town — Corman again, AIP, Dimension, etc.

Close to giving up the film idea, he got a deal with Cinepix in Toronto: 185,000 dollars end get it shot in 15 days, okay? And the rest, as the old cliché still goes, is history. *Shivers* became a hot hit, assisted in Canada by becoming something of a hot political potatoe due to some government investment in, of all things, shema, shema... a horror film! The headlined row reeched people who were necessarily Cronenberg faithful and business boomed. *Shivers* pulled in a neat 5-million dollars and was one of the first movies per-financed by the Canadian Film Development Corporation to show a profit.

Even so, it took our hero much time and hard hustling anew to make *Rabid*, despite his local success and fame overseas, spurred largely by Lynda Myles bringing his movies to the Edinburgh Festival. Cinepix were not too keen on *The Brood* either but that turn-down he also

engineered into a triumph and his new home. For what *The Brood* really bred was his new backers. The Toronto lawyer and the little distribution company which put up the *Brood* bread now call themselves Filmplan International. *Scanners* is their first film. Not that he was given much time to make it in. Cronenberg had to shoot it on the run: two weeks of pre-production, and despite all those special effects, night weeks only for shooting. The speed was necessary to bring the film in on time before the all important tax-shelter deadline date. Incidentally, on those effects, Hollywood make-up magician Dick Smith, did more work than his "consultant" credit covers. Smith was the

guy who among other things, turned Dustin Hoffman into a 120-year-old in *Little Big Man* and turned Linda Blair's head in *The Exorcist*...

"To be effective," says the Cronenberg, "horror pictures must be rooted in a recognisable, everyday context. Making a horror film is a collision between film-maker and audience."

As to the exploding head bit, which is said to have people fainting in American cinemas, Cronenberg insists the sequence was important, it helped set the effect of the film. "This really puts the audience on edge," said he. "They expect that there's going to be another head going off any time the scanning starts!"



THINGS TO COME

ENTER SUPERBIKE

It's a bird . . . It's a plane . . . No, it's Japan's answer to Super/Flash/Rangers/Empire and all that jazz. Moon Mask Rider, a strip cartoon superhero in local comics and tv animation for the past 25 years. He comes to life — live-action, in fact — in the personage of actor Deisuka Kuwahara. And more than a little assistance from Honda. Well, what's a Moon Mask Rider without a superbike to ride? Honda's Takaya Tura has designed this Rider's version of 007's Aston-Martin and the Lotus-Esprit. It comes complete with all mod cons — Infra-red rays, deadly weapons launcher, smoke and flame throwers, VTR, parachute and radar . . . and is due to be launched for the world at the Cannes film festival in May.

Fine, fine, but who or what is the Moon Mask Rider, I hear you ask? Well, apparently, he lives in the 21st century. Buck Roger's old neck of the woods. And he's a mix of Buck and Robin Hood on two wheels, flying hither and thither, righting wrongs, wronging rights and baddies, and showing all the Western superheroes a thing or three. In the movie, he teckles a particular band of nasty gangsters who are exploiting a youth community — as created, written and supervised (rather than directed) by Kohan Kawasumi. Hmm!

TELLY IDEAS

It's that silly season again, when American tele-executives have decided which ideas for new series they'll invest everything in but time and talent. The current batch of notions includes everything from series out of movies (Norma Rose, Private Benjamin and Nine To Five) to various weird and wonderful (?) ideas, some of them with titles as close as *Murder Ink* . . . and *Pen* and *Ine*. Heigh ho!

The father of The Men From *UNCLE*, Sam Rolfe, has dreamed up a new hero called Quarrel. Simon and Simon are among the (probably simple) detective teams being unfleshed; the couple

owning a bookshop selling whodunnits only are more of the same in *Murder Ink*. Fog has naught to do with John C., more about a luxury liner skipper demoted to running a tramp steamer. Comedy of Terrors promises to combine both in a North Carolina beach-house, and might do so as it's coming from Mary Tyler Moore's company, the brains behind *Rhoda* and *Lou Grant*. And special effects galore are said to be forthcoming in *The Wonderful World of Philip Malley* (a genius inventor, no less, brainchild of David Gerber taking a rest from *Police Woman*, *Police Story*. Funny, he never did make *Police Dog*).

Rather more intriguing is *Pen and Ine*, due to highlight a new Universal animation process, when the young animator-cum-political cartoonist starts his fantasizing. This must be the first-time animation has been so used in a series since the brilliant show inspired by James Thurber's works, *My World — And Welcome To It*. That was so good, it was axed in the very week when it scooped all the TV Emmies in 1969. And the star of *World*, William Windom has just finished a Quinn Martin pilot called *Quick and Quiet*, which sounds an American retread of Kenneth Cope's British series, *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)*, about two (more!) 'tees, one being the ghost of the dead partner of the other. Windom's the ghost with Rick Lohman as the (presumably) alive partner.

Oh yes and *Martin* is alive and well, if you can call it living being the centre of a new tv idea. Mr Martin, it's called. And far, far from John Boorman's *Excalibur*, the old wizard is now running a garage in San Francisco. And Americans wonder why we prefer British television!

THE HYPE BEGINS

The hype for *Clash of Titans* has begun . . . MGM has the *Rhy* Harryhausen movie, but Warner Brothers has the paperback — written by that well known paperback writer, Alan Dean Foster.

Meanwhile Richard Anobile is also preparing a foto-novel. Next come the toys, the bed sheets, egsgaps and what have you. No way to treat a good movie . . .

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

Chris Reeve's next non-Superman movie has a familiar ring to it. Called *Trapdoor*, it's being directed by the German *wunder-kind*, Wim Wenders, for Francis Coppola's currently financially strapped Zoetrope Studios. The story is about an American team of film-makers shooting an sf film in Portugal . . . running out of money . . . and trying to hustle extra funds from Hollywood . . . Sounds too close to be true to Coppola's current financial state. "Current?" thunders burly Coppola, "I'm always in money trouble!"

CANADIAN HORROR

It's not only Cronenberg who turns out horror winners in Canada. His backers, Pierre David, Victor Silnicki and Claude Heroux of Filmpian International, have discovered a great new team in writer Brian Taggart and director J.C. (for Jean-Claude) Lord. Or so it seems. Filmpian are so delighted with the pair's debut, *The Fight*, they're financing 11 O'Clock. You have been warned.



Above: A scene from the forthcoming *Joe* this summer and distributed

CARDLINE'S WINNER

Seems to have taken ages to open, but Caroline Munro's American movie debut, the blood-splattered *Menace*, has been creating a storm of queues and big box-office money in New York. In one ten-day period it pulled in 1.7 million dollars. Don't know what kept it on the shelf so long. I first saw it, with Caroline and hubby Judd Hamilton, in Cannes last May. Maybe (hopefully), it's been better edited by now.



THINGS TO COME



Boorman film, *Excalibur*, promised for and by Warner Brothers.



TOKYO CORNER

In Japan, Disney's less than successful *Black Hole* has finally become a top of the charts hit — in downtown Tokyo. It's beating all the other current science-fiction contenders and grasping hold of the No. 1 spot for a month or more. But what else can you expect of a town where the previous chart topper was . . . *Reise the Titenist Yeah, yeah, they adored The Final Countdown*, too!

ROME, SWEET ROME

Italy joins the robot genre with Catharine and I. Leading Rome comedian Alberto Sordi directs himself in this comedy of our times — with robots coming off better than humans. Or certainly better than his wife Valeria Villari, and girlfriends Edwige Fenech and Catherine Spaak. Sordi prefers life with his plastic-eyed robot — the Catherine of the title. Like a reverse of Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed*, the robot feels for Sordi. It's so jealous of the other women, it goes for him with a knife . . . and eventually makes him a prisoner in his own home. The Sordi romp is doing pretty good business . . . but nothing compared with *Omella Muri's* now home-made smash, *Taming of the Secunderl*, which is doing better business than her *Flesh Gordon* or *Superman*. Or *Empire Strikas Back*. It's the first Italian movie to gross 9.5 million dollars in one month.

WILLIAMS SCORES

Despite all his work, an immense amount of work, conducting the Boston Symphony and . . . Pops orchestras, John Williams is not deserting movies. He is, but of course, supplying the score for Stephen Spielberg's *Reiders of the Lost Ark*, due to open in America on June 19. And he's signed to write the music for the third George Lucas *Star Wars* tale,

Revenge of the Jedi, as well. Incidentally, Williams says that the original *Star Wars* album has now sold more than four million copies — more than any other non-pop or rock album in history.

MOVIES ON TV

One minute the American TV networks are saying they're cutting down on buying films for tv. They've lost too many times in the gamble of putting on a biggie and hitting some special Dallas episode or the release of the hostages on another channel. Films are costing too much, and the money would be better spent on making their own shows (the BBC, obviously, feel the opposite). Then what happens? NBC nip in before the cassette and cable-vision companies and quickly buy *Jemie Lee Curtis's* *Prom Night* for a prime-time Sunday night screening last month (February). They got a bargain, too. The film was less than seven months old in cinemas, and had earned more than 6-million dollars in the States. NBC picked it up for as little as 1.5 million dollars and gave the other networks, CBS, and ABC, exactly what they intended. A helluva fright.

QUICKIES

Kubrick's *The Shining* doing far better business than most critics thought possible; it should wind up as the fifth biggest seller in Warner Brothers' history . . . Oran producer Hervey Bernhard signed Philippe More to direct *The Beast Within* from Edward Levy's supernatural chiller . . . *Exterminator* Robert Ginty turns up next as *The Alchemist* . . .

SON OF QUICKIES

After his *Popeye* starring debut, Markish Robin Williams continues his new movie career in *The World According To Garp* . . . His director? George Roy Hill, from *The Sting*, and more important, *Slaughterhouse 5* (when will they re-release that?) . . . Andreas Voutsinas, is the latest screen

Drecula, in a French farce, similar to those old Abbot and Costello *Meet romps*. The *Charlots v Drecula Junior*. The (or /or) *Charlots* are a mild copy of *les Beaulés*. Well more of *les Monkees* . . .

WHOOPS...

Welcome to another edition of *Films We Advise You To Miss If You Want To Keep Your Sanity and Love of Science Fiction* . . . This month's entry is *James L. Conway's Earthbound*, from the Teft International people in Hollywood. *Earthbound* is no *Earthsearch* let's make that clear. It's designed like a 50s Disney family outing, all go! and lots of goo . . . like a tale of your ordinary, everyday aliens from up there someplace, having to land on terre-firme once their space shuttle affier springs a leak, a puncture or some such reason for urgent repairs. They're made welcome down here by an innkeeper — *Burl Ives* is the main *Disnevesque* casting — and his orphaned grandson. Pause now for tears. Oh c'mon, all orphaned grandchildren are supposed to make you weep . . . The alien family — led by Christopher Connolly, who used to be *Ryan D'Neel's* brother in tv's *Peyton Place* and quite plainly, he's never got over it — has its own Disney touch . . . in a green chimpanzee which tends to eat you out of heath and home, and especially light-bulbs. *Hol Hol Villains* of the — yawn — place are the Federal space agency type *Joseph Cempenelle*, hunting down the visitors, in harness with the local sheriff, *John Schuck* — the robot-cop from *Holmes and Yo-yo*. Their job is not made any easier by the fact that the aliens can make themselves invisible any time they feel like it, among other outlandish tricks. What they can't do, of course, is locate spores for their machine (obviously a British *Layland* creation). And guess what — they decide to stay here on Earth, moving in with *Burl Ives* and the tot, *Todd Porter*. The whole thing lasts 94 minutes, which is exactly 83 too long.

To some people the idea of a new version of Jack Arnold's superb *The Incredible Shrinking Man* may seem redundant. Why remake a film so perfectly realised as that 50s gem?

Well, the question is still there but I'm happy to report that *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* is both an homage to Arnold's film and at the same time a bright, refreshing comedy.

Where the original was something of a warning against the dangers of atomic radiation, the new film is an often hilarious swipe at modern (American) consumerism and the potential threat of the highly processed foods we eat and the numerous chemical concoctions we apply to our bodies, spray up our noses, on our hair, under our arms and other parts too delicate to mention.

Pat and Vance Kramer (*Lily Tomlin* and *Charles Grodin*) are a happily married couple who live in Tasty Meadows, a super middle-class suburb. He's a highly successful advertising executive whose job it is to name these various plastic-society products. She's a devoted wife and mother to their two children (*Shelby Balin* and *Justin Dana*). They have a Spanish maid named Concepcion (*Maria Smith*) who spends most of her time

watching Mexican soap operas on television.

Life is good for the Kramers. Vance is on the up in his job and Pat blissfully lives the life of the highly-automated housewife. And then disaster strikes. Through a freakish combination of tap water, car exhaust, and a type of super glue, Pat Kramer discovers that she is beginning to shrink.

This opening section of the film is well-handled by screenwriter Jane Wagner and director Joel Schumacher and the satire runs rampant in the visual depiction of the Kramer's blissed-out life style. The production, designed brilliantly by Raymond Brandt, is a strident multi-coloured attack on the eyes. It's highly reminiscent of the studio artificiality of the great MGM musicals of the 50s. I was expecting to see Gene Kelly appear at any moment.

Many of these early scenes are lifted straight from the original film including the touching and symbolic sequence in which the shrinking woman's wedding ring falls from her finger. Schumacher even manages to work in a reference to Arnold's other classic, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

Before long, Pat Kramer finds herself

being chased by the family dog, living in a doll's house and becoming a national curiosity hounded by the media. Husband Vance, as understanding as he is, takes to reading a hefty tome, *Marriage Without Sex*. He is also under pressure from his boss Dan Beame (the ever-reliable *Med Bear*) to make sure that Pat doesn't reveal the cause of her shrinking. Life for the Kramers has been turned upside down.

Up to this point *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*, apart from its garish visuals and humorous dialogue, is a fairly straight remake. The second part of the film though takes off into the realms of outlandish fantasy and for the most part succeeds. Two mad scientists enter the picture. They are Dr Eugen Nortz (*Henry Gibson*) and Dr Ruth Ruth (*Elizabeth Wilson*). They work for a mysterious company (*World Management*) and kidnap Pat in the hopes of concocting a serum from her blood. This serum, when fed into water supplies all over the world, would reduce everybody to shrunken people - except them of course.

Pat is held in a secret laboratory, her family convinced she has perished in the garbage disposal unit. They even hold a symbolic burial service in the garden,

the incredible sh



Above: Vance Kramer (Charles Grodin) and Sidney the Gorilla (Hlok Baker). Right: Pat Kramer (Lily Tomlin) finds herself in fear for her life at the mechanical hands of a band of battery driven boys. Opposite left: Chow time! Pat has a tiny table set up for her, though she eats appreciably less at this size. Opposite right: Pat, in the early stages of her shrinking problem, is wheeled around a supermarket in a shopping trolley.

burying her remains — a tiny shoe — in a match box.

Meanwhile, back in the secret lab, Pat manages to befriend a super intelligent gorilla named Stanley (*Rick Baker*) and, with his help, escapes. There is a happy ending when Pat is reunited with her family. Well, an *almost* happy ending. Universal look like they have left their options open to remake *The Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*!

The Incredible Shrinking Woman was originally going to be directed by John Landis, but differences over the film's budget and Landis' commitment to *The Blues Brothers* put an end to that. How many of Landis' contributions remain is anybody's guess, though Rick Baker's Sidney is one of those elements. The film was hastily re-edited before release, which probably accounts for the feature's short running-time of 89 minutes.

And so to the special effects. Incredible Shrinking Woman finally cost Universal around 15 million dollars and in all truth it just isn't apparent on the screen why the film ran up such a tab. However the pre-release editing should be taken into account. Who knows what was shot, what it cost and was left out of the final release prints? That said, however,

the effects in the film are quite good, if not making any major artistic advances since the Jack Arnold version. The mechanical effects engineered by Roy Arbogast (*Jaws*) and the recent version of *Dracula*, Guy Faria and David Kelsey are never less than spectacular. Particularly well staged is Pat's encounter with an army of battery driven toys, her narrow escape from the garbage disposal and the slapstick finale when Sidney rescues the pint-size lady from the clutches of Dr Nortz.

The optical work by Bruce Logan is, for the most part, acceptable if at times the back projection and mattes are a little shaky. But *Incredible Shrinking Woman* is one of those movies which, through its script and performances, rises above such quibbles, something which *Flash Gordon*, for example, failed to do.

While on the subject of special effects I think it only fair to devote some space to Rick Baker's work. Baker has made quite a name for himself in recent years through his development of special make-up effects and in particular for *King Kong* (1976). That was a stinker to be sure, but how much worse it would have been without the contributions of Baker, who at least tried to give Kong a character

through his complex ape suit and performance.

When John Landis was originally slated to direct *Incredible Shrinking Woman* he told Baker he was going to give him the chance to create his most intricate gorilla costume ever, and it's my guess that a large chunk of the film's budget went into this aspect of the production. Rumour has it that certain Universal executives were so convinced by Baker's efforts that they thought Sidney was a real gorilla. Well, it's good, not that good, though Hollywood producers are not particularly noted for their perception.

Apparently much of Baker's work ended on the cutting room floor, which is a pity. His performance is a high-light of the film and I would have liked to have seen a lot more of him.

The Incredible Shrinking Woman is a fun picture, although its savage satire occasionally gets in the way of the laughs. I may be proven wrong by box office receipts, but it looks like the kind of film that will hastily disappear. If it comes your way, see it. It is the perfect antidote to all those gore films masquerading as entertainment.

Shrinking woman

A STARBURST FILM REVIEW BY PHIL EDWARDS





The one thing you can say about Popeye with any certainty is that it is a very peculiar movie. In fact, the only other movie I can think of that is remotely like it is Li'l Abner and even there the similarities are on the surface. Like Popeye, Li'l Abner brought grotesque comic strip characters to life on the screen in a musical format but Li'l Abner was based on a stage show and the film was little more than a recording of that show with flat, painted backdrops and stylized sets. Popeye, on the other hand, is set very much in a real, three-dimensional world and has been directed by someone whose name is synonymous with cinematic naturalism — Robert Altman.

All the usual Altman trademarks are present in Popeye: the overlapping dialogue overlaid with background sounds and fragments of half-heard conversations, and richly detailed background action in which the extras appear to be living separate lives of their own. At times I was strongly reminded of Altman's offbeat western McCabe and Mrs. Miller, especially since the half-finished pioneer

town in that movie and the ramshackle town of Sweethaven, where most of Popeye is set, are so similar (there's even a western-style house-of-ill-repute in Sweethaven, which has to be a first for a Disney film).

Now it has been said, with some justification, that Altman's idiosyncratic approach is the wrong one for a movie like Popeye and that a more straightforward directing style should have been more suitable but I disagree. I think it's the clash between Altman's naturalism and the unreal subject matter that makes Popeye so interesting and unusual (it's as if the backgrounds in a *Bugs Bunny* cartoon had been drawn by Hogarth).

As to whether or not it succeeds as a movie depends on what type of movie you think Popeye is... and that's not an easy thing to decide. Li'l Abner, for instance, was simple to define. It was a film version of a typically raucous Broadway musical-comedy that happened to be based on a then-popular, satirical newspaper strip (by the late Al Capp), but what is Popeye? It's not a conventional comedy, nor a conventional



popeye

A STARBURST FILM REVIEW BY JOHN BROSNAN

musical and it's not satirical like Li'l Abner. Well then, what's it actually about...?

On the surface Popeye is a simple tale about a sailor who arrives at a small seaside community looking for his long-lost father. At first he's rejected as an outlander but then he becomes romantically involved with the town belle, Olive Oyl (who is reluctantly engaged to the town bully, Bluto), at the same time being entrusted with the care of an abandoned baby, Swee'Pea, and these two relationships provide him with instant emotional ties and responsibilities.

When Swee'Pea is kidnapped by Bluto, because of the baby's ability to tell the future, Popeye discovers that Bluto's boss, the corrupt ruler of Sweethaven, is none other than his missing father, Poopdeck Pappy. At this point the focus of all the action becomes Pappy's sunken treasure that Bluto is determined to steal. Taking Olive and Swee'Pea with him, Bluto heads for the site of the treasure where the final climactic battle between him and Popeye takes place.

According to the producer, Para-

mount's Robert Evans, Popeye is "a celebration of the individual" which is a fair enough description, I suppose, but one that can be applied to many American films from Shakespeare to *The Monster That Challenged the World*. If you want to make a movie that celebrates the individual why on Earth pick Popeye as your basis? Was perhaps Popeye Evans' favourite comic strip character? Had he for years nurtured a burning ambition to turn Popeye into flesh and blood on the big screen? Well, no to both questions — he wasn't and he didn't. It turns out that Evans hit on the idea of filming Popeye simply because he'd failed to get the film rights to the successful stage musical *Annie*. Looking around for an alternative comic strip character that could be exploited for the basis of a musical (*Annie*, of course, is based on the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*) he picked on Popeye for the simple reason that Paramount already owned the screen rights to the character and was still making thousands of dollars a year in royalties from the original "Popeye the Sailor Man" theme song from the old cartoons.



Opposite top: In the finale of the film, Popeye (Robin Williams) battles it out with Bluto (Paul L. Smith) — the prize? Poopdeck Pappy's (Paul Smith) treasure. Opposite bottom: In an effort to raise some money, Popeye challenges a professional boxer while the people of Sweethaven cheer him on. Left: Popeye and Olive Oyl (Shelly DuVall). Above: For the first time in years Popeye comes face to face with his dad, Poopdeck Pappy. Right: Bluto, as portrayed by Paul Smith.

So there you have it. The aim behind Popeye the movie was to cash in on the success of *Annie* (the film version of which is being made by John Huston). But to his credit Evans did decide on having Jules Feiffer write the screenplay, a decision which immediately put the project onto a different level because Feiffer is not only a well-known cartoonist, satirist, playwright, script-writer and novelist but also an expert on comic strips and therefore familiar with the work of E.C. Segar, Popeye's creator. Feiffer agreed to do the script only if he could base it on the original Segar strips, which are very bizarre and full of off-beat humour, as opposed to the animated cartoons (started by Max Fleischer back in the early 1930s). Evans went along with Feiffer on this, even to the point of siding with him against Dustin Hoffman, who was originally slated to play Popeye, when the star disagreed with Feiffer's approach.

All well and good but somewhere along the line a compromise was made because the finished film falls between two stools — at times reminiscent of

Segar and at other times obviously based on the cartoons, particularly at the climax when Popeye and Bluto fight over Olive (some of the sight gags, like Popeye coming through the water like a human torpedo, are directly based on the cartoon ones). One feels that Evans and Feiffer decided to play it safe and angle the movie more towards the cartoons because, after all, most people today know Popeye through the cartoons rather than the strips, especially outside of America.

The fact that Evans originally conceived Popeye as a musical must have caused problems as the production developed because Popeye and his world doesn't automatically strike one as ideal material for musical interpretation. To add to the impression that the marriage between Popeye and the musical format is an uncomfortable one are Harry Nilsson's songs themselves which, though generally likeable, are of a strongly sentimental nature and therefore totally at odds with the rough vulgarity of the Popeye strips and cartoons. Some degree of sentimentality was necessary to engage



Above: Wimpy, the hamburger king, is played with devastating accuracy by Paul Dooley. Left: A bad moment for Popeye (Robin Williams) during the boxing match.

audience sympathies with what are basically two dimensional cartoon characters but I think Nilsson's contribution makes the film too sentimental at times — it stops being Sagarish and becomes just sugarish . . .

Of course the version of Popeye on release in Britain has been "demusicalised" to some extent. Not only is it about 20 minutes shorter than the American one but at least 5 of the songs have been cut. Having heard the album I regret the absence of some of them, such as "Blow Me Down" which Popeye sings as he enters Sweethaven (a lot of fascinating footage of the town and its weird inhabitants must have hit the cutting room floor along with the song) and Bluto's theme song "I'm Mean". Missing too is the duet "Sailin'" that Popeye and Olive sing, which serves to confirm their relationship, and both of Poopdeck Pappy's songs which, though not very good, did establish his character and outlook on life. Without them Poopdeck is a vague and ill-defined figure in British version.

It may be that the picture is much improved by these cuts but I would have

liked the opportunity to see the full version.

Of the songs that do remain the Sweet-haven "Antman" and Olive Oyl's song about Bluto, "He's Large" are the most memorable. The others are such light, fragile affairs they fade from the mind almost immediately like cotton candy. Which brings me to the cast — everyone is of a high standard but the top honours must go to Shelley Duvall as Olive. It's the part she was obviously born to play. Robin Williams is less successful as Popeye but mainly because his task is that much more difficult. Trying to make a bald, one-eyed creature with arms and legs shaped like bowling skittles into both a believable and likeable character is not easy and it's a considerable achievement on Williams' part that he's about 80% successful. Paul L. Smith and Ray Walston are okay as Bluto and Poopdeck Pappy but both characters have been somewhat trimmed down in the British version. Oh yes, Wesley Ivan Hurt is a convincing baby . . .

Probably the most interesting characters in the movie aren't the stars but the inhabitants of Sweethaven.

Instead of using ordinary extras Altman peopled the huge Sweethaven set (built in Malta) with a collection of acrobats, clowns, stuntmen, tumblers, wire walkers and trapeze artists with the result that there is always something going on in the background to attract your attention. The visual background complements the audio one — as in many of Altman's films you have to listen really hard or you'll miss several good jokes (Popeye's verbal asides, some of them difficult to catch, are a good example).

Popeye is a film that will provoke strong polarised reactions — you'll either like it or loathe it. I've got to admit I rather liked it, particularly the first third which concentrated on Popeye's arrival in Sweethaven and introduced both the town and its eccentric inhabitants. In these sequences Altman and company have succeeded in creating a genuinely original atmosphere — it's as if we're getting a glimpse into a different universe which bears a surface resemblance to our own but is fundamentally different underneath. This is an effect that good fantasy literature often produces but is rarely achieved on the screen.

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THE FAST FILM CHART

It's that time again, folks! And we have a bigger and better than most informative Starburst Fantasy Film Chart this year than ever before. Why stop at 145 films, my one said last year. Okay — now we're encompassing the box-office fate of some 200 fantasy films. And that will be the ceiling from hereon — The Top 200.

This year's chart is the one we've all been waiting for, right? It finally answers the riddles left up in the air as you when Star Trek and The Black Hole had not only just opened for business... and before, of course, George Lucas' empire struck back at the copycats such as... well, Lew

Grade 3's Setback

How did the box-office battle work out? Did Disney manage to topple Cark Kirk into a black hole? Just how well (or badly) did Setback 3 do? Was De Palma able to topple Carrie with Dressed To Kill? Just how does Superman rate today?

The best news of all from this year's figures though, is that the top three movies — it's been pointed out in the chart, and make no excuse for repeating here — are the top three box-office champions in the world. (Just double up the figures given here for an approximation of world business.) This means, in case you don't realize it, that it is now con-

firmed — fantasy films are the best!

Incidentally, Star Wars still tops the poll, despite a slight recalculation from last year's Variety figures — a 156.013 dollar drop in fact. Computers have obviously been boiling over, both at Variety and certain film companies. For this is not the only revised box-office tally. The sharpshoot drop hits Robert Aramian's end of the world warring, The Leto Great Planet Earth — in the middling 13-million dollar ere last year and now almost 47 pence on its listings with a revised take of just 8-mill dollars. (Perhaps Don Welles charged more for his

narration than first thought!) Also appreciably down on previous tallies are Demeodon Alok, The Island of Dr. Moreau, Reincarnation of Peter Proud and Friend of the Goats. On the other hand, the Sun-Taft company seems to have finally released their takings on a parcel of genre exploitation, which is why Charlots of the Gods and Mysterious Monks are in the chart for the first time since they were released eight and three years ago.

The Starburst Fantasy Film Chart would be non-existent if it weren't for the annually readjusted listings of a thousand or more features in the all-time

champs chart in Variety, the show business bible which has lately celebrated its 75th birthday. From their movies, old and new, I separated our wheel from a lot of shoff — that's our list compiled. (Not as easy as it sounds, all the same.)

The report for 200 films this time — spent from meeting the wishes of our readers — is that obviously new films come into the list each year. Time will come in future years to drop some to make the figure at 200. Don't worry, I know which ones to drop. Your views on the annual list are as welcome as ever, even if the percentage of complaints centre, year in end year out, on

the self-same topics. Why is this film in and that one out? The films that are missing are those we have no records for (without six months' research). The movies excluded here before — they started the whole disaster movie cycle. Bad Seed has not been listed as it started now, but it's here because it started the kiddie-murder genre.

These three areas also help supply the directors with the best track-records, by the way. Hitchcock has eleven movies in the list, Disney's Robert Stevenson running second to him with six (the Bond-makers — Young, Hamilton, Gilbert — were three each or so). Next director with

Somewhere in Time is in, why not Heaven Can Wait, after all? The High and the Mighty and San Francisco remain, despite letters galore, for the reasons I've expressed here before — they started the whole disaster movie cycle. Bad Seed has not been listed as it started now, but it's here because it started the kiddie-murder genre.

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the most is De Palma with four — I refuse to count the new 'Class Encounters as Spielberg's fourth entry, so there! Worth adding though that of the 200 features, some 83 were made by British directors...

So there we are. The rest of the hidden kernels of information, facts, figures, and a good few surprises, are yours to dig up, start for and now, settle a few bets perhaps (a small percentage of all winnings will be most appreciated), or otherwise just have a good time making the journey from the brilliant top three... down to, I must edit a rather gruesome final ten in The Top 200.

THE TOP THREE in the Fantasy Chart and world cinema history

- (1) Star Wars Director: George Lucas, 1977. 175,005,000
- (2) Jane Steven Sailors, 1975. 133,439,000
- (3) The Empire Strikes Back Into Kambar, 1980. 120,000,000

REST OF THE TOP TEN and their positions in history.

- (4) The Exorcist William Friedkin, 1973. 80,000,000
- (5) In world history after Grace. 1916. 77,000,000
- (6) Superman Richard Donner, 1978. 82,000,000
- (7) The Godfather Part II Francis Ford Coppola, 1973. 82,000,000
- (8) Close Encounters of the Third Kind Steven Spielberg, 1977. 77,000,000
- (9) Star Trek: The Motion Picture Robert Wise, 1978. 176m in history after Grace With The Wind, Saturday Night Fever, Anselmi House, Jamaica And The Sands, Kramer vs. Kramer, and One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest.
- (10) James H. Jones Steven, 1978. 10th in history after American Draft.
- (11) The Towering Inferno John Guillermin, 1976. 23rd in history after Rocky, Every Which Way But Loose and Love Story.
- (12) Heaven Can Wait Henry Berns/Cherry Henry, 1978. 24th in history. 60,400,000

REST OF THE TOP TWENTY

- (13) Airport George Seaton, 1970. 43.3m
- (14) The Poseidon Adventure Ronald Neame, 1972. 42m
- (15) Alan Turing Scott, 1978. 39.8m
- (16) Young Frankenstein Mel Brooks, 1974. 38.8m
- (17) Andrew Jim Armstrong/Clint and Jerry Zucker, 1980. 38.6m
- (18) King Kong John Guillermin, 1976. 38.2m
- (19) Earthquake Mark Robson, 1974. 36.2m
- (20) The American Horror Story Stuart Rosenberg, 1978. 36.1m
- (21) Measure for Measure, 1976. 35.2m
- (22) The Shining Stanley Kubrick, 1980. 30.2m

AND SO TO THE REST OF THE TOP 200

- (23) The Great Escape Richard Donner, 1978. 28.54m
- (24) The Godfather Part I Francis Ford Coppola, 1972. 28.53m
- (25) Snow White Anderson, 1937. 26.7m
- (26) The Clock Syndrome James Brynner, 1979. 26.6m
- (27) Airport 1979 Jack Smight, 1975. 26.1m
- (28) The Great Escape Richard Donner, 1978. 25.5m
- (29) 2001: A Space Odyssey Stanley Kubrick, 1968. 25.4m
- (30) The Poseidon Adventure Stuart Rosenberg, 1978. 25.2m
- (31) The Godfather Part II Francis Ford Coppola, 1973. 25.1m
- (32) The Poseidon Adventure Stuart Rosenberg, 1978. 25.0m
- (33) The Poseidon Adventure Stuart Rosenberg, 1978. 25.0m
- (34) The Poseidon Adventure Stuart Rosenberg, 1978. 25.0m
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Compiled by Tony Crawley



FANTASY FILM CHART cont.



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|--|--------|--|--------|
| 104. (-) Herbie Goes Bananas Vincent McEveety, 1963. | 7.9m | 153. (126) Flash for Frankenstein Paul Morrissey, 1974. | 4.7m |
| 105. (29) Return From Witch Mountain John Hough, 1978. | 7.2m | 154. (120) Fritz The Cat Ralph Bakshi, 1972. | 4.7m |
| 106. (73) Grizzly Wilms C. Ginder, 1979. | 7.2m | 155. (124) Wizard Ralph Bakshi, 1977. | 4.85m |
| 107. (96) Rattle and Chains Richard Cole, 1979. | 7.1m | 156. (120) House of Wax André de Toth, 1953. | 4.86m |
| 107. (1) It's Alive Larry Cohen, 1977. | 7.1m | 157. (120) The Sentinel Richard Donner, 1977. | 4.82m |
| 109. (104) Beyond The Door Oliver Helman, 1975. | 7.00m | 158. (-) Harrison Jim Truitt, 1975. | 4.84m |
| 110. (85) Wheelworld Michael Crichdon, 1973. | 7m | 159. (120) Conquest of the Planet of the Apes J. Lee Thompson, 1972. | 4.8m |
| 111. (-) Servus Rex Canzone, 1979. | 6.9m | 160. (120) To Catch A Thief Alfred Hitchcock, 1955. | 4.6m |
| 112. (-) The Strangelove Men in the World Vincenzo McEveety, 1975. | 6.9m | 161. (132) The Spaceman and King Arthur Ross Mayberry, 1979. | 4.6m |
| 113. (20) Frenzy Alfred Hitchcock, 1972. | 6.0m | 162. (133) Mancoed John Sturges, 1963. | 4.3m |
| 113. (20) Frenzy Alfred Hitchcock, 1972. | 6.0m | 163. (-) The Awakening Mike Newell, 1990. | 4.25m |
| 113. (20) Frenzy Alfred Hitchcock, 1972. | 6.0m | 164. (120) Meteor Ronald Norro, 1979. | 4.2m |
| 116. (-) North by Northwest Alfred Hitchcock, 1959. | 6.4m | 166. (-) Bad Seed Mervyn LeRoy, 1956. | 4.1m |
| 117. (22) Alice in Wonderland Animation, 1951. | 4.37m | 160. (130) The Man Who Knew Too Much Alfred Hitchcock, 1956. | 4.05m |
| 119. (94) Blow Up Michaelangelo Antonioni, 1967. | 6.35m | 167. (-) Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? Robert Aldrich, 1962. | 4.05m |
| 120. (112) Time After Time Nicholas Meyer, 1979. | 6.3m | 168. (131) Battle for the Planet of the Apes J. Lee Thompson, 1973. | 4.07m |
| 121. (-) The Pink Clowndown Don Taylor, 1980. | 6.19m | 169. (-) The Exterminator James Glickenhaus, 1990. | 6m |
| 122. (97) The High and The Mighty William Wellman, 1954. | 6.1m | 160. (161) Feed of the Gods Bert I. Gordon, 1974. | |
| 123. (20) Phantom Don Cornelli, 1979. | 6m | 161. (131) Futurworld Richard T. Heffron, 1979. | |
| 124. (101) The Seven-Peak Solstice Herbert Ross, 1978. | 5.60m | 162. (131) The Island of Dr. Moreau Don Taylor, 1977. | |
| 125. (102) Raza With The Devil Jack Starrett, 1975. | 5.02m | 163. (131) The Masterpieces of Martin James Robert Stevenson, 1964. | |
| 126. (-) Manger 18 James L. Conway, 1980. | 6.76 | 164. (132) The Nasty Professor Jerry Lewis, 1964. | |
| 127. (-) Close Encounters of the Third Kind - The Special Edition Steven Spielberg, 1980. | 5.70m | 165. (133) Dementia Brian De Palma, 1976. | |
| 128. (105) Rear Window Alfred Hitchcock, 1964. | 5.70m | 166. (139) The Omega Man Boris Sagal, 1971. | |
| 129. (104) Escape From the Planet of the Apes Don Taylor, 1971. | 5.68m | 167. (139) San Francisco W.S. Van Dyke, 1936. | |
| 130. (105) Barabara Roger Vadim, 1968. | 5.5m | 168. (-) Somewhere in Time Jeannot Szwarc, 1990. | |
| 130. (105) Barabara Roger Vadim, 1968. | 5.5m | 169. (-) The Stepford Wives Bryan Forbes, 1975. | |
| 131. (105) Fantastic Voyage Richard Fleischer, 1966. | 5.3m | 170. (-) The Wizard of Dr. Victor Fleming, 1939. | |
| 132. (-) Hero At Large Martin Davidson, 1980. | 5.3m | 171. (-) Nightwing Arthur Hiller, 1979. | |
| 133. (-) The Changeling Peter Medak, 1980. | 5.3m | 172. (-) Mad Max George Miller, 1979. | |
| 134. (105) Flash Gordon Howard Zieff, 1974. | 5.25m | 173. (-) Terror Train Roger Corman, 1980. | |
| 135. (109) Death Race 2000 Paul Barri, 1970. | 5.2m | 174. (-) The Fifth Floor Howard Avron, 1980. | |
| 136. (120) The Legacy Richard Marshall, 1979. | 5.2m | 175. (-) Simon Munhall Brodwin, 1990. | |
| 137. (-) The Fleishle Plot of Dr. Fu Manchu Peter Haggard, 1960. | 5.17m | 176. (-) Feds To Black Vernon Zimmerman, 1990. | |
| 138. (111) Monty Python and the Holy Grail Terry Gilliam/Terry Jones, 1975. | 5.03m | 177. (-) The Heena George Hevies, 1980. | |
| 139. (105) Demonation Alley Jack Smith, 1977. | 5m | 178. (-) Star Crash Luigi Cozzi, 1979. | |
| 140. (112) Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love The Bomb Stanley Kubrick, 1964. | 5m | 179. (-) Beyond The Posidon Adventure Irwin Allen, 1979. | |
| 141. (112) King Kong Merin C. Cooper, 1933. | 4.9m | 180. (-) The Children Max Kuzminowicz, 1980. | |
| 142. (-) The Resurrection of Peter Powell J. Lee Thompson, 1976. | 4.83m | 181. (-) Death Ship Alvin Karpoff, 1980. | |
| 143. (-) Return 3 Stanley Donen, 1960. | 4.8m | 182. (-) Don't Answer The Phone Robert Harner, 1980. | |
| 144. (117) Spellbound Alfred Hitchcock, 1945. | 4.8m | 183. (-) He Knows You're Alone Armand Mastroianni, 1980. | |
| 145. (118) Knights of the Round Table Richard Thorpe, 1963. | 4.8m | 184. (-) When Time Ran Out James Goldstone, 1980. | |
| 146. (120) The Legend of Boggy Creek Charles B. Pierce, 1972. | 4.8m | 185. (-) The Glass Hammer Robert Fosse, 1979. | |
| 147. (120) Moby Dick John Huston, 1956. | 4.8m | 186. (-) Walkers of Atlanta Kevin Connors, 1975. | |
| 148. (120) Moby Dick John Huston, 1956. | 4.8m | 187. (-) Most Hell Kevin Connors, 1980. | |
| 149. (120) Moby Dick John Huston, 1956. | 4.8m | 188. (-) Vampire Playboys W. Schlöss, 1990. | |
| 150. (120) Moby Dick John Huston, 1956. | 4.8m | 189. (-) Candy's Game Edy Merloni, 1978. | |
| 151. (123) Journey to the Centre of the Earth Henry Levin, 1969. | 4.77m | | |
| 152. (124) Die Dachs Stanley Kramer, 1959. | 4.775m | | |
| | | 190. (-) Sater's Playthings Sidney Meyers, 1935. | 1.050m |

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A STARBURST INTERVIEW BY MIKE MUNN

THE MACHINATIONS BEHIND THE DECISION THAT RICHARD DONNER WOULD NOT DIRECT *SUPERMAN II* WERE NOT POPULAR AMONG SOME MEMBERS OF THE CAST. ACTRESS MARGOT KIDDER COUNTS HERSELF IN THAT CATEGORY.

....LOIS LANE SPEAKS....

It wouldn't be unfair to compare actress Margot Kidder with the character she portrays in the *Superman* series of films. She has the same outspoken manner that would have led Lois Lane to have become such a successful reporter.

She has certainly not been happy with the behind-the-scenes machinations that have plagued the series since the completion and success of *Superman The Movie*. And her last favourite event was the dismissal of director Richard Donner and his replacement with Richard Lester.

"It was a disgusting move on the part of the producers to fire Dick Donner, and they did it I believe — and you must add I believe so they can sue me — simply to save themselves some money," Margot told me.

"They're the kind of people who put money above human beings every time and it's an attitude I personally find loathsome. Donner was the man who made their first *Superman* movie successful, who made our careers successful, who made them a pile of money which is all they respect, who did half the work on *Superman II* and devoted a huge hunk of his life to it, and they turned around and stabbed him in the back.

"There was a lot of resentment about that, but Lester knew all about it. I mean, he had his tangle with them on *The Three Musketeers*, so he walked into an awkward situation. Luckily, being who he was, it was okay. I like Richard Lester very much and think he's extremely good. But we definitely did miss Dick Donner on the second one. We were a tight family who'd been together for a year and a half before that and who loved each other, and daddy was no longer there. Poor Dick Lester felt very bad about it himself. He was in such an awkward situation.

"Half of *Superman II*, or a great deal of it, is Donner's work and he should be



given credit for it. It's his work and the characters that we created came by his direction. The only bitterness on the set was not towards Lester. It was towards the producers.

"Whatever the reason for firing Dick Donner, it certainly didn't have anything to do with morals. It was an amoral act in

my opinion. Please write in my opinion."

Margot also has some strong words to say about the absence of Marlon Brando for Part Two. In her opinion — right Margot? — "The producers owed Brando some money and they didn't want to pay him. I think he was due by contract certain foreign rights. We filmed a great



Top: Clark Kent (Christopher Reeve) and Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) as they appeared in *Superman The Movie* (1978). Left: In the first film of the series the relationship between Lois Lane and Superman was idyllic, like something out of *Snow White*. In *Superman II* their love affair is presented in a much more graphic (though hardly less lyrical) way.

deal of Part Two with Part One, as you know, and Brando had filmed all his part for *Superman II* already.

"The reason he's not in it is because if he appeared they'd have to give him a percentage of some money from certain countries and they were so greedy they didn't want to pay him. So we had to

leave out a lot of stuff we'd already filmed with references to Brando and his actual scenes, and so Susannah York did a lot of his scenes which meant a lot of re-filming."

Apart from these traumas Margot said, "Superman is the sort of movie you have a lot of fun making because it is not full

of inner torment and anguish and we had a lot of laughs."

It also had its dangerous moments, even for Margot. In one scene she gets swept away in the rapids below Niagara Falls.

Like a true comic book heroine, Margot shrugs off the threat the scene had on her well-being.

"To a lot of people it's dangerous, but I always enjoy that kind of thing so it doesn't really bother me. I'm a pretty physically active person and used to hang glide years ago before I was a mother, so I'm always attracted to high-risk sports.

"But I must admit to feeling a little nervous when I was in the rapids and I knew that if I got swept through the rocks in the white water I was a gonner. They obviously had a lot of safety precautions. Someone did the part of going way out in the white water which was obviously a hugely dangerous stunt, but I did most of it."

I asked her if she had difficulty getting back into the part of Lois Lane when she started *Superman II* after such a long break.

"Having played her for a year and a half I knew her inside out and backwards," she answered. "Usually, I do most of my work on discovering the character before I start filming. You know, finding their quirks and how they dress what little idiosyncrasies they have. But Lois was different because I got cast and virtually went immediately to work, so the first couple of months was spent doing the homework while working."

I asked Margot if she felt there was a likelihood, a danger even, depending on how she looked at it, of being remembered for the rest of her life as Lois Lane in *Superman* rather than any of the other movies she's made like *The Great Waldo Pepper*, *Willie And Phil* and whatever else may come in the future?

She gave one emphatic "No," and added, "I've made sixteen movies and some of them got a lot of critical acclaim although *Superman* and *The Amityville Horror* — hal hal — were the biggest box office successes.

"Save me from being remembered for *The Amityville Horror*!

"I don't really care what the public remembers me for because that's where I derive pleasure from my work. As an actress in films — I don't do theatre — the joy is in the process and when the film comes out a year later its kinda anticlimactic."

"You don't sound too impressed with *The Amityville Horror*," I said.

"It was a piece of garbage," she replied.

I told Margot that I'd met her co-star in that film, James Brodin, shortly after they'd completed it and he seemed at the time very enthusiastic about it.

"Jim is a lovely guy and a much better

PR man than I am," said Margot. "We all made jokes about it the whole time we were doing it. I think the whole thing about the haunted house was a load of rubbish. Making those horror films is pretty funny because you have this glucose blood pouring all over the place, and there was this stuffed pig coming at the window and the director going 'Oink! Oink!' It's really hard to take seriously."

"So why did you make it?" I asked. "Money!" she replied. "My policy with my agent is we do one for money, one for heart, one for money, one for heart. Which works out very well because doing some work purely for commercial reasons allows me to do the artistic ones like *Wilde And Phil* which I did for very little money and loved making. Now I have financial security for myself and my daughter for the rest of our lives."

Her little girl, who is now five, is the only thing to have survived Margot's first and, so far, only marriage which came to a head just as Margot was beginning work on the first *Superman*. It proved a difficult period for her. It was also a time of friction between herself and Christopher Reeve.

She explained: "Chris and I had very different styles in both temperament and acting. He thought I was an outrageously undisciplined slob who came charging in with too much energy, and I thought he was a kind of uptight pris who used to get annoyed if I changed things a little, which I tend to do. My working method is to use what's around me, and if that changes within a scene then I'll go along with it. Chris likes to get it absolutely fixed before we do anything and he'd get upset when I'd throw in a little bit here and there."

"After a couple of months we finally had a head-on confrontation and we ended up becoming the best of friends. He loosened up because of me and I had to shape up a bit in terms of a kind of discipline so really it was a good trade-off."

"Now he's like my brother. He'll be part of my family 'till death."

To the chagrin of many, the *Superman* legend gets dented somewhat in *Superman II* with romance between Lois and Superman being physically realised. I asked Margot if she was bothered at all about harming the legend.

"I don't know anything about the *Superman* legend," she said. "I never read *Superman* comics and don't know much about it."

"But the first film sets the legend," I pointed out, "and makes us believe that a man can fly because he is something greater than a mere mortal, almost to the point of being some kind of saviour. Then the second film expects us to believe he is prepared to give up his superpowers and become mortal for the sake of one woman. What do you think about that?"



Above: A portrait of Lois Lane (Margot Kidder). Right: Clark Kent (Christopher Reeve) is introduced to the Daily Planet staff for the first time in *Superman the Movie*. Below: Ursula holds Lois Lane prisoner in the *Fortress of Solitude* in *Superman II*. Below right: Lois in deadly danger... again! *Superman the Movie*.



"I think it makes a good story," was her reply. "I don't have any alliance to the myth because it was never part of my life, but I guess *Superman* freaks might get a bit upset about it. But they know a lot more about it than I do."

Coming to a complete stalemate on that subject, I asked her what her next film would be.

"At this point I have a script half finished that I'm writing. It's from a book that I bought the rights to called *Lady Oracle*. I managed to get development money for it and I had four other people write screenplays which didn't work out, so the author of the book said, 'Why don't you try it yourself?'"

"Have you written scripts before?" "Yeah, but nothing that ever got done. I've had a couple of journalistic articles published. I haven't done any for about five years. I did one about celebrity gymnasiums for *Sports Illustrated*. "You see, my attitude to life tends to be that if you are given about 80 years to live, it's sort of stupid not to try as much as you can in those 80 years. I'd hate to be just an actress."

"I've directed a film for the American Film Institute's Women's Directing Workshop and loved doing that, working sixteen or seventeen hours a day and never feeling tired. I learned to do editing, working with Robert Altman for a year and a half and loved that."

"I'm trying to produce *Lady Oracle* and I don't like it. Producing is anti-artistic in that the job requires diplomacy and a certain amount of manipulation and being a good salesman, and I'm just not very good at all that."

She describes *Lady Oracle* as "a psychological study which is also a comedy of a woman who feels obliged to be inconspicuous and mousy and sweet to please everybody. But inside her rages this romantic heroine which she wishes she was. So she writes these gothic romances and casts herself as the heroine but keeps it hidden. Then they become very successful and people start to find out it is in fact her and she gets mortified at the discovery and fakes her own suicide and escapes to Italy. But then she feels she doesn't want to be dead after all and comes back."

Well, I thought she sold that well enough. It'll certainly help her in her battle to avoid the inevitable efforts of producers to typecast her in the Lois Lane mould.

"I even got offered Brenda Starr which is a comic strip girl reporter which is being filmed," she said. "I got offered a lot of sci-fi and horror films."

"And you won't do any horror films at all?"

"They bore the pants off me," she answered. Actually she used another word instead of pants. But like I said, she's an outspoken lady.



SCANNERS

A REVIEW OF THE LATEST SCIENCE FICTION BASED HORROR MOVIE FROM CANADA'S DAVID CRONENBERG BY JOHN BROSNAN

David Cronenberg's *The Brood* was one of the most original and interesting movies of 1980. It worked not only as a horror movie but said more about parent/child relationships, and more honestly, than that other 1980 movie about a father fighting with his ex-wife over the possession of their child, *Kramer vs. Kramer*. (Of course it was the schmalzy letter film that reaped all the praise and stardom while *The Brood*, because it was a genre film, was automatically dismissed.)

The *Brood* confirmed David Cronenberg as one of the film industry's most exciting and innovative new talents, going further to fulfill the promise he showed in *Shivers* (*They Came From Within*) and *Rabid*, and naturally led one to have high hopes for his first big budget movie *Scanners*. Unfortunately, *Scanners* is something of a disappointment. It's not a failure by any means and there is much to enjoy in it but after *The Brood*, it's a definite let-down.

First of all, for the benefit of the science fiction readers out there, let me say that *Scanners* has nothing to do with either Cordwainer Smith's classic 1950 short story *Scanners Live in Vain* or Philip K. Dick's 1977 novel *A Scanner Darkly*. Instead it has more in common with George Pal's 1958 movie *The Power* both in theme and plot construction. Both films begin with a super-mind revealing its existence during an ESP demonstration (in *The Power* the manifestation is merely a piece of paper being twirled on a pin while in *Scanners* it's a head exploding) followed by a middle section where the renegade super-mind eliminates his enemies one by one and climaxes with a telekinetic duel between the two protagonists (the battle in *The Power* was fairly spectacular, ending with the hero, George Hamilton,



mentally stopping the villain's, Michael Rennie, heart but *Scanners*' far outdoes it, at least in terms of graphic horror if not in visual imagination).

It's this lack of real originality that's most disappointing about *Scanners*. The theme of telekinesis, and related mental powers, has been used a lot recently, in films like *Carrie*, *The Medusa Touch* and *The Fury*, but Cronenberg doesn't do anything new with the idea or take in as yet unexploited areas as one expected he would. There is nothing in *Scanners* that we haven't already seen in *The Fury* and I must admit that of the two I prefer the De Palma film (for all his talents Cronenberg can't compare to De Palma as a pure film maker).

In many ways *Scanners* doesn't resemble a typical Cronenberg movie because its emphasis is mainly on action

and pyrotechnics instead of the usual Cronenberg territory of bizarre psychological and physiological manifestations. There is really only one section in the film that can be described as vintage Cronenberg and that's the one dealing with the mentally tortured scanner, Pierce (Robert Silverman, who also appeared in *The Brood*). Pierce copes with his telepathic agonies by producing sculptures of a grotesque and profoundly disturbing nature, the most impressive of which is a giant hollow head into which he can retreat — the perfect visual metaphor for his state of mind.

The other Cronenberg ingredient that's missing from *Scanners* is sex — or rather Cronenberg's usual rather highly individual interpretation of the nature of sexuality, and one that is invariably tinged with self-loathing and physical

disgust. It has been a powerful underlying theme in all of his films since his avant garde productions, made when he was a student, *Stereo* and *Crimes of the Future*, and its absence in *Scanners* is noticeable.

The picture is flawed in other ways. The overall construction of the screenplay is slipshod and there are several clumsy lapses. Apparently this is partly because Cronenberg had to start shooting, for various financial reasons, before he had even finished the screenplay. "There was a time," he said, "when no one knew what was going on. Times when everyone went to lunch and I wrote the scene that was coming up." That may explain why the narrative flow is far from smooth and why pieces of the story seem to have been left out completely but it doesn't explain lapses like the fact that the scanners, who are unable to block the unwanted thoughts from other people unless they take a special drug, are always being caught unaware by people sneaking up on them (I lost count of the times the scanner hero was surprised by the villain's gunmen).

But the biggest flaw of all is the aptly named person who plays the lead, Stephen Lack. Lack's lack of acting talent seriously damages the film and the flat reading of some of his lines, particularly in the crucial sequence when he and the villain finally confront each other, provoked laughter from the audience when I saw it. Apparently Cronenberg cast him on the strength of his unusual eyes (and they are unusual — they seem to point in two different directions) which seems a silly thing to do. But then the Bond producers cast George Lazenby as James Bond on the way he walked...

Everyone else in the cast is good, especially Michael Ironside as the villain Revok who looks a bit like Jack Nicholson and suggests the same manic





This page: In the devastating finale of the movie, Revok (Michael Ironside) and Vale (Stephen Lack) battle it out in a duel of the superminds. The results are grisly and very, very final

energy just below the surface. Also good to see Patrick McGeehan again, though his character, Dr Ruth, is simply thrown away towards the end of the movie (another of the screenplay's many faults).

But for all its flaws *Scanners* is certainly worth seeing. The plot-thread connecting the set-pieces may be tangled, if not completely severed at times, but the set-pieces themselves give value for money. There's the nail-biting exploding head sequence near the start (trimmed before the release of the film — a shot of the decapitated body slumping forward after the explosion has now gone); the battle in the sculptor's studio between the scanner protagonist and the villain's gunmen; the car chase during which the side of an innocent-looking panel van suddenly opens up like a Man-o-War sailing vessel to unleash a broadside of deadly automatic gunfire; the sequence where the hero mentally infiltrates, via a telephone, a computer system (unfortunately the interior resembles a 1930s wireless set) and sparks off a telekinetic holocaust when the computer operators attempt to trap him by shutting down the computer; and, of course, the mental duel at the climax of the movie where make-up expert Dick Smith achieves some really gruesome effects with bulging veins and bursting eyeballs (I heard that someone fainted during this sequence at the screening I attended).

Not destined to be a classic, nor even the best Cronenberg so far, *Scanners* is nonetheless an entertaining and often exciting horror-thriller. One just hopes that with his next production Cronenberg will return to his more unique and individual style of film making rather than to simply remake what has gone before.





The photos on this page are not cuts from the finished film but rather original pieces of artwork used for the 1937 British set of lobby cards. Above: Snow White guesses the names of the Dwarfs. Below: The Dwarfs return to their cottage and are surprised to find the lights on.



A Starburst Fantasy Classic by Richard Holliss

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs



When Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was premiered on December 21st 1937 at the Carthy Circle Theatre in Los Angeles, Walt Disney was only 36 years old. In the previous 11 years he had elevated what amounted to nothing more than a series of crude sketches into an art form and was just embarking on a career in animated feature films that would span over 40 years.

Seeing Snow White today, one gets the feeling that everything that followed was in no way superior, just a natural

progression as film technology improved. The idea for a full-length animated feature was at the back of Disney's mind as early as 1928, following the success of Steamboat Willie, the first sound cartoon short. However, it wasn't until early 1935 that Disney first announced to his staff his intention to bring Snow White to the screen.

Some of the Disney artists, amongst them people like Ken Anderson and Wolfgang Reitherman, had kept notebooks with details of camera angles from live-action films they had seen. Disney



Right: The entire cast of the 1937 Walt Disney film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Above: With a rousing chorus of "Hi-ho, hi-ho" the Dwarfs return from their demand mines in the mountains. Below: A light-hearted moment as the Dwarfs and Snow White ending into a song and dance routine.



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of them all!



Walt Disney's
Snow White
and the Seven Dwarfs



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encouraged this approach with all his artists in an attempt to improve and mould his cartoon shorts into more ambitious projects.

The main problem to be forseen with Snow White was the draughtsmanship of the human characters, Snow White, the Queen, the Prince and the Huntsman. The studio's only previous attempt at making animated life-like characters convincing came in an early Technicolor Silly Symphony entitled *Goddess of Spring*. From a purely technical standpoint however the effect was a failure.

In mid-1935 Disney set up an office adjacent to his, from which two of his top animators, Fred Moore and Vladimir Tytla worked on preliminary animation for the Seven Dwarfs. Moore was perfect for giving the Dwarfs personality, whilst Tytla was an excellent artist for combining weight and power in his drawings. As the design work got under way, the story department formulated the names of the Dwarfs. Suggestions led to a list containing such possibilities as Jumpy, Nifty, Baldy, Stubby, Gabby and Wheezy and from these emerged the world-famous names we know today: Doc, Grumpy, Sleepy, Happy, Sneezy, Dopey and Bashful.

Voices for the Seven Dwarfs were chosen very carefully so that they would compliment the characters exactly. Pinto Colvig, the voice of Goofy, spoke for Sleepy and Grumpy. Otis Harlan and Scotty Mattraw became the voices of Happy and Bashful respectively. Roy Atwell, famous for his spoonerisms voiced Doc, and Billy Gilbert who had a successful stage act involving sneezing fits, perfectly suited the dwarf Sneezy. Dopey was a problem however, so it was finally decided that he wouldn't speak, not because he couldn't but because he'd never tried!

Voices to suit the human characters proved just as difficult. Harry Stockwell voiced Prince Charming, and Moroni Olsen spoke the dialogue for the Magic Mirror. The evil Queen's voice was supplied by Lucille LaVerne and not Eleanor Audley as has been previously suggested in other sources. Audley however did make famous the characters of the Step Mother in *Cinderella* and Maleficent, the evil fairy, in *Sleeping Beauty*. For Snow White, Walt Disney chose not to attend the auditions in person, fearing the girl's appearances would affect his decision for the right voice. Listening to the singers over a speaker in his office, he picked Adrianna Caselotti, who later reported that she was proud of her association, however brief, with the Walt Disney Studio. Miss Caselotti who is still alive and living in Hollywood recalls to this day the years of popularity she has enjoyed over a few lines of dialogue she spoke as Snow White, so long ago.

By 1936, more and more and more of the studio personnel were starting to work on Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Disney started to send them in small groups to study art at the Chouinard Art Institute. He even began employing new talent to assist in the mammoth project. One new addition to the animation staff was Frank Thomas, who helped Tytla and Moore on the Dwarf scenes. Eric Larson, Milt Kahl and James Algar (later a director of the Disney true-life adventure films) worked on the forest animals, creating a delightful group of characters, who constantly jostled each other for attention. Norman Ferguson animated the Witch, whilst Hamilton Luske had the difficult task of working on the film's leading lady.

Luske was an excellent draughtsman and to help him Disney hired the services of a number of vaudeville stars, actresses and performers. This amazing array of entertainers acted out scenes from the film for the live action cameras. The resulting footage helped the artists to understand how people moved. Marjorie Belcher, wife of animator Art Babbitt (*Fantasia*, *Pinochio* etc) posed for Snow White, whilst Louis Hightower modelled for the Prince.

One of the layout men, Ken O'Conner, hit on the idea of tracing the live action from a Moviola onto animation paper, one frame at a time. This was a definite help to the story men as well as the animators, although it should be stressed these drawings were used only as a guide



Above: "Some Day My Prince Will Come." The Happy Ending, traditional of all fairy tales. Snow White marries the handsome Prince and all is right with the world.

and not for rotoscoping (ie tracing exactly the live action figures for animation).

The initial budget of 250,000 dollars was, by this time, steadily rising, but Disney continued to strive for perfection. He constantly encouraged his fellow workers to think up bigger and better ideas - whatever the cost. In fact, two major sequences were cut out completely, because Disney felt they slowed the pace. Both were handled by animator Ward Kimball, better known for the space programmes he directed on the Disney-land television series in the fifties. The first of these contained the Dwarfs soup-eating sequence with the continuing gag about Dopey and the bar of soap he had swallowed in the washing scene. The second was the sequence in which the Dwarfs build a bed for Snow White. Fortunately, the rough pencil tests (animators drawings that have not been transferred onto celluloid) still exist for the soup scene and drop up occasionally in the Disney shows.

Other members of the studio worked on the backgrounds and colour-scheming. It was decided to use muted colours, so that the brightness of the earlier Technicolor shorts wouldn't be inflicted on the cinema audiences for a full hour and a half. Albert Hurter and book illustrator Gustaf Tenggren drew inspirational sketches. The most exciting of these being those that told of Snow White's flight through the woods after escaping the Huntsman's knife. When transferred to the screen - with the placing of the central character amid a framework of clawing tree branches, logs and malevolent eyes - it becomes a masterpiece of screen macabre. The sequence in which the Queen transforms herself into a cackling old hag carries a similar impact. As she drinks the evil brew, the background begins to spin around her. An unbelievably well-executed effect, and yet just a mere detail in the overall plot. In fact, a lot of the film's excitement is created through very clever editing, particularly during the Dwarfs race to rescue Snow White from the Witch's poisoned apple which is intercut with scenes at the cottage of the dastardly deed taking place there.

Close attention is also paid to the shadows cast by the Dwarfs' lanterns as they enter their cottage at night and the vivid flashes of lightning reflected in the falling raindrops at the film's powerful conclusion. It was scenes such as these that gave Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs an 'A' Certificate in England and unbelievably a ban in some parts of the country as it was assumed to be too terrifying for children!

These astonishing animation effects were created by Ub Iwerks and a team of technicians who devised the Multiplane Camera, a gigantic structure of moving



Above: Snow White's wicked stepmother (voiced by Lucille La Verne) orders the huntsman to kill Snow White and return with her heart in the basket. Below: Snow White's wild escape into the depths of the forest is one of the high points of the movie.

planes on which the animated cels were laid, whilst the camera zoomed towards or away from them giving the illusion of a three-dimensional image. A short was made to test the camera. It was called *The Old Mill* and won the Academy Award for the Best Cartoon of 1937, as well as a Special Award for the techniques involved to make it. The camera was also used for Snow White's wishing well scene at the opening of the film. The sequence had already been filmed by conventional animation early in the film's production. However, when Disney saw the improvements made with the Multiplane Camera, he insisted the scene be re-shot, disregarding the added costs of such a move.

To obtain the extra money need to finish the picture, Roy Disney suggested to his brother that he show the nearly-completed film to executives at the Bank of America. Disney reluctantly agreed, but it proved to be a good idea, and the money was forwarded. Now the rush was on to get Snow White ready for a Christmas 1937 release. The studio worked overtime, pouring more and more man-hours into what was being called throughout Hollywood "Disney's Folly". Certainly there were those around him who felt the film would be a flop and mean the end of Disney as a studio. How wrong they all were! Snow White was released and overnight became a critical and box office success. Disney had hoped for the film to be released

coast to coast in time for Christmas, but the Technicolor labs could not get the copies out in time. When the premiere took place in Los Angeles only two complete prints of the film were in existence. By early 1938 Snow White was available everywhere, with a massive merchandising campaign to back it up. There were Snow White lantern slides, slippers, dolls, cards, books, soap, records and jewellery.

It opened for a successful five-week run at the New York Radio City Music



Hall, and an amazing thirty-one weeks in Paris. In England, some clever cut-away exhibits constructed by Richard Costain were put on display at London's Olympia in 1938 and a stage version followed at the Victoria Palace in 1939.

Immediately it was dubbed into ten languages for world-wide distribution through RKO, and other major Hollywood studios watched, with great surprise, the success it garnered. Some were even prompted to try their own feature-length cartoon films. The only notable one to emerge however, was Max Fleischer's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, which had been heralded to cost 250,000, dollars, ended up costing one and a half million. But with the successful box office receipts of between two and three million dollars in the USA and Canada alone, by mid-1938 Disney was able to open up a new animation studio in Burbank, California. This is the same studio which is currently working on the new Disney animated feature film, *The Fox and the Hounds*.

One of the greatest rewards to Disney, although he was never carried away by success, was the presentation from Shirley Temple at the 1938 Academy Awards of one full size Oscar and seven little awards — one for each Dwarf. To see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs today, over 40 years later, is to see why it was so fitting a tribute to one of Hollywood's greatest entrepreneurs.

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Above: Roy Ashton (photo by John Fleming). Below: A series of photographs showing the process of a Roy Ashton monster. In the first, mild mannered actor Paul Massey is photographed as a basis on which to work. The second shows the tracing of the makeup Ashton made over the first picture. The third is the two superimposed. The fourth photograph shows the makeup as it finally appeared in the Hammer film *The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll* (1961).

Roy Ashton spent five weeks on *The Monster Club*. "There wasn't very much opportunity to do a lot of preparation," he says, "because it was shot in a great hurry, really, and there were so many characters. The secretary of the Club is werewolf, for instance. I said 'Do you want the full job on this?' It would take a week of preparation, really, to cast the fellow's head and to model and make prosthetic pieces. But we didn't do a bad job on it in the time we had. 'I did his nose by stuffing bubble gum' dummies up it. If you get a dummy and snip the rubber bit off at the bottom and top, that makes a passage through which you can breathe and it will push out the nostrils and that will give a sort of wolf-like appearance. I did make some ears but, then again, it's such a subtle matter placing these blessed ears that you really need to experiment with the shape and particularly the positioning. The ears of a human being are roughly halfway down the side of the head, but a dog's ears are placed way up there. You have to enclose the human ears and make the new ones of a shape that resemble a dog's and place them so they can be clearly visible but not give the show away too much. It's a compromise between a human being and a dog. On the first appearance of this werewolf who's the secretary, I did stick ears on, but covered them up so much with hair that, in the long run, I didn't have to bother about the ears because you couldn't see 'em."

"Then there was a tremendous amount of fangs and teeth—more than on any other film I've ever done. I went and got a dentist to do them. I used to make 'em in the past, but no more because a dental mechanic has got all the

facilities and is so accustomed to doing these things he can knock them out in a tenth of the time we, with our limited facilities, can. The usual way of doing it is jacket crowns (which fit over the actor's real teeth like caps) but this chappie who does them for me makes them with a little plate so there's none of the bother of worrying whether they're going to stick or not: they just clamp in behind the tooth and the normal canines just rest on this denture he makes."



ROY ASHTON THE MAN BEHIND THE MASKS

Starburst regular John Fleming talks to the man behind some of the most famous monstrous creations of the Hammer Film company. Roy Ashton assisted on *Dracula* (1958) and *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959) before graduating to full makeup artist status. He has designed monsters for *Evil of Frankenstein*, *The Reptile* and, more recently, *The Monster Club* (1981).

If you were to meet Roy Ashton socially, you would think what a gentle, civilised, immensely likeable man he is. And you'd be right. You might also think he has a pleasant, inoffensive job; perhaps something in insurance. You'd be wrong. Howard Roy Ashton was born in Perth, Western Australia, and has been responsible for make-up on many of the classic British horror films. Like many movie people, he just drifted into the business.

When he left school in Perth, he served

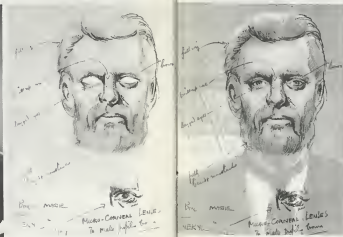
articles in architecture but was always more interested in creative drawing than the plodding draughtsmanship required to design buildings. So, after three years toil in the government's Public Works Department, he left and became an illustrator in a commercial firm of blockmakers and designers. This was around the time of the Great Depression and Ashton decided to go to England, where prospects were greater and where he studied etching, figure drawing, etc., at London's Central School of

Arts and Crafts. One day, he saw a note on the college notice board about apprentice make up men for the Gaumont British Film Corporation. He applied, was accepted and spent five years training under German make-up men from Berlin's UFA Studios who were working for Gaumont in London. After he left Gaumont, he worked for and was sacked by Gainsborough Pictures, then he went to Denham Studios, where his work was interrupted by the Second World War. He had also started a career in

music.

In the Army, he became a radar instructor, started singing to troops around the country and ended up being asked to paint pictures of weapons in action: "I did lots of drawings showing tanks getting blown up, bicycle pumps getting blown up and so on," he says. Then the war started to end in Europe and all the high-ups in my section started getting sick and getting discharged, so I became a lecturer to fellows from other countries with scrambled eggs all over their caps. I used to discourse most leisurely to them about how many people had been killed by secret weapons dropped in France. I hadn't the faintest idea what the hell I was talking about, but it seemed to be quite a good thing. I used to get all the Army circulars and, one day, it said that men with university education to finish would be considered for early release. I had a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music that still had a year to run so, in a few weeks, I found myself out of the Army and seriously back to music. I went on doing that for ten or twelve years."

He became principal operatic tenor at Glyndebourne and Covent Garden as well as performing with various other companies. It wasn't until 1955 that he moved, part-time, back into the film industry because "in the music lark, you're never at home—you're all over the blasted place." So he went to MGM (in Britain) and re-entered the business as Gene Kelly's movie invitation to the Dance. For a time, he sang in the winter and did films in the summer, gradually becoming involved with Hammer Pictures. He was an occasional assistant to their makeup chief, Phil Leakey, starting with *Dracula* (1958), on which he





fitted Christopher Lee's fangs. Eventually, Phil Leakey left and Ashton was asked to join Hammer full-time, starting with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959). He stayed for seven years, making almost forty films with them. When he first started, he used to go to London's College of Surgeons to study anatomical specimens, so he knew the forms of bones and skeletons. But one of the most difficult things he had to deal with at Hammer was trying to find out what directors and producers actually wanted. "You were presented with a script," he explains, "but they only had a vague idea of what they really wanted. So I used to make drawings and then eventually make models so that, at last, they got a clearer idea of what they didn't want. Then we gradually narrowed down the field until they said *Oh yes! That's it! Go ahead and do that*. Then you got the actor, cast his head or whatever and, on the set, modelled the changes."

On *The Evil of Frankenstein* (1964), Ashton drew 120 different sketches of possible make-up for the monster. Eventually, design number 112 was chosen. He says he wasn't aware at the time that Hammer were contractually forbidden from using the original Universal make-up design and, as he had seen the film and not read the book, there was something of the Kerloff monster inevitably in the ideas he offered: "Not very much, though," he adds, "I had my own notions of what it ought to be."

His work often overlapped with the special effects and, he says, "As often as not, it was whoever first got hold of the problems who solved it. A good deal of special effects, the make-up department was responsible for—like when blood came out of fingertips or cuts on the chest or that sort of thing. We were the ones who usually rigged it up—and sometimes at very short notice."

"While we were shooting *The Evil of Frankenstein* [director Freddie Francis suddenly said I want the creature to bang his head through a piece of glass in this library door. Fix his head up, Roy. So how the dickens

do you do that?"] Because this was a brand new idea, no 'sugar' glass had been prepared. Shooting stopped while Ashton ran about. "After sweating a lot," he says, "I remembered I had a tin up in one of the departments. I went and got that and a pair of tin-snippers and I fashioned a kind of artificial hand which enclosed the actor's head and stuffed it full of sponge plastic and then put

skin and everything on top of that so it passed muster as a fist and protected it so he was then able to bang it through the glass. That's the sort of thing you're sometimes called upon to do."

Working for Hammer tended to be a case of living by your wits and thinking up ingenious ideas on the spur of the moment. On *Phantom of the Opera* (1962), the original make-up mask



Top: A series of preliminary sketches for the makeup for *The Evil of Frankenstein* (1964). Above: *The Reptile* (Jacqueline Pearce) was another makeup created by Roy Ashton.

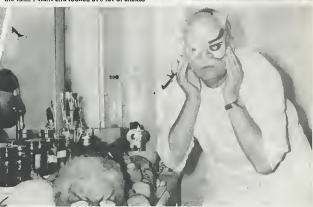
Top left: Roy Ashton works on moulds for false heads. Centre right: Actress Jacqueline Pearce is made up for a role in the Hammer film *Plague of the Zombies*. Far right: Roy Ashton clowns around with a mask used in *Plague of the Zombies*. New right: A makeup sheet given to the crew of *The Evil of Frankenstein* so that continuity could be maintained.

Top left: Roy Ashton works on moulds for false heads. Centre right: Actress Jacqueline Pearce is made up for a role in the Hammer film *Plague of the Zombies*. Far right: Roy Ashton clowns around with a mask used in *Plague of the Zombies*. New right: A makeup sheet given to the crew of *The Evil of Frankenstein* so that continuity could be maintained.

showing the phantom's burned face was not designed by Ashton. An outside mask-maker was employed but none of his designs was suitable. Eventually, after three weeks of indecision and shooting round the problem, Hammer ran out of time. Ashton was asked to make a face in approximately five minutes, while the crew waited. He used camera tape, a piece of old cloth, some grease and some rubber. The whole thing was literally held together with a bit of string. Yet it looked effective on screen.

Not all jobs were so rushed, although Hammer productions tended to be a bit like a conveyor belt. "As you approached the end of the current film," Ashton explains, "you got a little time to prepare for the next one." On *Curse of the Werewolf* (1961), his job was to turn Oliver Reed into a wolf (although some actresses might claim he was one already). Ashton prepared by making sketches of a real wolf at London's Natural History Museum. He then encased the actor's head in a plastic dome reaching from the eyes to the back of the skull. The dome was covered with stiffened yak hair. Reed's nostrils were dilated with wax inserts and canine jacket crowns were put on his real teeth. His head and shoulders were covered with overlapping hair and, on his body, he wore a leotard covered with more yak hair. His hands, too, were covered in hair, his fingernails were extended into claws and he wore canine contact lenses for close-ups. The transformation scene was accomplished by stop motion photography with yak hair added between shots.

A similar head dome was used on Jacqueline Pearce in *The Reptile* (1966). This one was made of laminated paper and ran from her nose to the back of her skull. Hair and in-skin was added on top of this. The fangs, attached to a plate inside her mouth, dripped not with venom but with glycerine. "She was an awfully nice girl," Ashton recalls. "Very, very nice. But the poor darling suffered from claustrophobia [see interview with Jacqueline Pearce Starburst 32]. Sometimes she had to tear off that head just when I'd got it on. It took maybe 1½ or 2 hours, something like that. I did research for the film. I went and looked at a lot of snakes



and got books about scales and the anatomical arrangements, which are not dissimilar to the arrangement of bones on a human head. I got a big snakeskin from somewhere, cast a good section of it and then poured plastic in so I got a lot of snakeskin reproduced. That came in handy for *The Gorgon* (1964) as well. I put bits of the skin on her to suggest, well, snakeskin."

Ashton was not altogether happy with the *Gorgon* as seen on the screen, though. He felt the snakes finally used were too big. There should have been more of them and they should have been smaller: "My suggestion was these little serpents which are made as children's toys. They're fastened on a strip of leather and little wooden sections fit very closely to one another: if you pick them up by the tail, they writhle. I said *Why not make a few of those things?* But they didn't like the idea and they (the special effects department under Syd Pearson) went and made these bigger ones; there were only about six or seven of them and it wasn't too good."

Remarkably, Ashton achieves subtle effects with the most unlikely materials. To simulate veins when Anton Diffring aged in *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* (1959), he used woollen threads from one of his old pullovers. To give a realistic, bloated look to the undead in *Plague of the Zombies* (1966), he used thin, crumpled tissue paper covered with liquid latex.

He says his most difficult task on *The Monster Club* was the scene in which "the good lady heroine had to melt. I had to take it in three or four stages. I had a cast of her face and I made up four masks almost wholly of wax backed with tissues. If you melt candle wax and drip it onto tissue, that'll give a dripping,



Above: Roy Ashton works on the skeletal corpse that was used in the Hammer film *Paranoia*. Below: One of Roy Ashton's zombies leaves his grave in *Plague of the Zombies*. Inset: A preliminary makeup test in which Barry Du Bouley wears the foundation proposed for Anton Diffring's makeup in *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*.

molten effect and as it gets more and more molten so it comes to resemble the ultimate appearance. The art department said they would take over the final thing with the girl completely molten and they would have a waxen replica of her with hair and they would project a blast of hot air on this thing. Well, I thought they'd have a bit of trouble there because the first thing the blast of hot air will do is to blow the wig right off. And that, in fact, happened. Anyway, they ended up by sending her up in flames and letting it be thought that was what they'd intended in the first place."

Since his days at Hammer (he left in 1966 after *The Reptile*), Ashton has been involved in everything from *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* to *Jane Eyre*, various *Amicus* and *Tyburn* horrors, three *Pink Panther* films, *The Spaceman and King Arthur*, *Little Lord Funtleroy* and small, uncredited pieces of work on *Flesh Gordon*, *Ragtime* etc. The amazing thing is that he still enjoys his work. He remembers that, when he was called in to supervise *She* (1965), Ursula Andress asked Roy Ashton: *Who's he?* and was told *Oh, he's a special man: he specialises in curious effects*. "I don't mind that," he says. "There's great pleasure in turning out a female actress, doing a nice slick job making her look lovely. Great satisfaction in that. But it's not as exciting or taxing a matter as dressing up some very unusual character with a good beard and bags under the eyes and all the rest of it. I could, I suppose, retire, but what's the good of that? A lot of my colleagues have retired and I scratch my head and think *What the hell do they do all day long?*"



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the frankenstein chronicles: part II BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN

The second part of our three episode history of the Frankenstein legend by Phil Edwards.

During the opening credits of *Frankenstein*, the actor portraying the monster was identified by a mysterious question mark. It was only during the rapist cast list that Boris Karloff's name became known to the audience. Universal thought the actor, buried under pounds of greasepaint and make-up, mattered very little to the film's audience. They were soon proved wrong. *Frankenstein* was an instant smash hit, garnering good reviews along with millions of dollars at the box office. Throughout the rest of 1931, the actor continued to play small but important roles in a variety of films ranging from *Tonight or Never* to a remake of *The*

for *Frankenstein* that Karloff received the most praise and fan mail.

As early as 1933 Universal considered a sequel to their ground-breaking horror film, but it was 1934 before the wheels were put into motion for the production of *The Return of Frankenstein*. It would undergo another title change to *Frankenstein Lives Again* before the studio finally decided on the title *Bride of Frankenstein*.

James Whale once again directed the film and Colin Clive returned as Henry Frankenstein, who Universal wisely decided to let live at the end of the first film. Mae Clark was replaced by Valerie Hobson as his wife Elizabeth. Although

Fritz had been killed by the monster in the original, Dwight Frye was back as yet another devoted assistant, this time named Karl. Irish Abbey player, Una O'Connor, was cast as Minnie, housekeeper of Castle Frankenstein. O'Connor had screamed her way through James Whale's other big horror film, *The Invisible Man* in 1933 and would render the same service for *The Bride of Frankenstein*. The small but important role of the monster's mate went to Elsa Lanchester, wife of Charles Laughton.

With Henry Frankenstein somewhat repentant regarding the death and destruction his creation had caused, it became necessary to introduce a catalyst

into the plot — a character to galvanise the young scientist into action again. This was a master-stroke of casting and writing and once again it was Bela Lugosi who caused the change-about in roles. Lugosi was offered the part of Dr Septimus Pretorius but turned it down. James Whale, with his predilection for British actors, chose the cadaverous Ernest Thesiger and a classic character of fantasy cinema was born.

Scripted by John L. Balderston and William Hurburt, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, while retaining the ambience of much of the original, introduced a strain of black humour to the characters and proceedings. The film opens with a

prologue which has Mary Shelley (also *Elsa Lanchester*) telling her husband Percy (Douglas Walton) and Lord Byron (Gavin Gordon) that the monster had not died in the flames of the burning mill. This was all Hollywood fabrication of course — in the original novel the monster had perished in the snowy wastes of the Arctic. Over flashbacks from the first film, Mary narrates the events leading up to the fiery confrontation in the mill and the film proper begins.

With Henry recuperating after the fall from the mill, he tells Elizabeth that he is finished with his experimenting. The parents of Maria (the child drowned by the monster in the famous cut sequence

of *Frankenstein*) have gone to see for themselves that the monster is indeed dead. The father climbs into the rubble only to have the floor give way beneath him. He falls through to the cisterns of the mill and there meets the monster, burned and scarred but very much alive. The monster kills the father, climbs out of the destroyed mill and throws the mother to her death.

Pretorius, having heard of Frankenstein's experiments, visits the young scientist. He tells Henry that he too is experimenting with the creation of life and takes him to his laboratory. There he shows him the results of his work, six perfectly formed miniature living people

In rapid succession, Karloff starred with Charles Laughton and Melvyn Douglas in James Whale's black comedy *The Old Dark House* and created another fantasy icon with Karl Freund's *The Mummy*.

Miracle Man, Universal, realising they had a potential star on their hands, wanted the actor to pursue horror films to capitalize on the success of *Frankenstein*.

In rapid succession, Karloff starred with Charles Laughton and Melvyn Douglas in James Whale's bizarre black comedy *The Old Dark House* and created another fantasy icon with Karl Freund's atmospheric masterpiece *The Mummy* (both 1932). The actor was loaned out to MGM for Charles Brabin's extraordinary piece on a trip to England in the same year, where he shot *The Ghoul* for Gaumont. Karloff returned to solid support roles for the American studios.

Despite the success of films like *The Old Dark House* and *The Mummy*, it was



Unlike *Frankenstein*, Pretorius has not created his living manikins from the dead, rather he has grown them from seeds. Before he knows it, Frankenstein is all fired up with the creation bug again.

which he keeps in glass jars. Five "people" really, as one is a mermaid. "An experiment with seaweed," Pretorius explains. Unlike *Frankenstein*, he has not created the living manikins from the dead, rather he has grown them from "seeds". Before he knows it, Henry is all fired up with the creation bug again, convinced that with a combination of his and Pretorius' techniques they can build a living being and not repeat the same mistakes he made the first time around. They decide to create a woman. "That should be really interesting," comments Pretorius.

The idea of building a mate for the monster is a plot element from the original novel, though in that instance Frankenstein becomes disgusted with his





Above left: A touching scene as the monster (Boris Karloff) comes to appreciate the sight of female beauty. Above: Boris Karloff relaxes on the set and finds time to enjoy a sandwich. Below left: Henry Frankenstein (Colin Clive) and Dr. Pretorius (Ernest Thesiger) examine their handiwork, the monster's mate (Elsa Lanchester). Opposite: Director James Whale adds a few finishing touches to Boris Karloff's makeup.



work before she can be brought to life. Further episodes from the book were translated to the screen in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, perhaps the most important being the monster's brief stay with a blind hermit from whom he learns some speech and the pleasures of a fine cigar. It was this sequence that Mel Brooks so hilariously sent up in his highly amusing homage to the Karloff *Frankenstein* series, *Young Frankenstein* (1974).

The production designer for *The Bride of Frankenstein* was Charles D. Hall who had also worked in the same capacity for *Frankenstein*. Hall had started as a designer in 1921 with *Smiling All the Way*. In 1923 he designed Lon Chaney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and in 1925 *The Phantom of the Opera*. He was also responsible for the stunning sets in *Dracula*, *The Old Dark House*, *The Invisible Man* and the art-deco masterpiece, *The Black Cat*. Some of the sets from *Frankenstein* were incorporated into *The Bride* and new sets built, including a full-scale village constructed on the backlot at Universal. Many of the



sets were actually built from stone and further enhanced by the lighting of cinematographer John Mescall.

Mescall brought to *The Bride* a fluidity of camera movement quite unlike that of Arthur Edson's work on *Frankenstein*, though much of this can be attributed to the advances in on-set sound recording achieved between the two films.

Like *Frankenstein*, *The Bride* contains many great scenes which have passed into film history, though the quirkiness of Whale's direction has never been duplicated. The death of Maria's parents is watched by an unblinking owl; Pretorius helping himself to a drink of gin in a crypt; the capture of the monster and his imprisonment and trial; the scenes in the hermit's cottage where the monster finds a few moments of tranquility; the monster seeing his reflection in a pool of water only to destroy it by splashing the surface; Pretorius' pride in his miniature creations and the final sequence in the lab when Pretorius, Frankenstein and Karl bring "the bride" to life — all these display James Whale's brilliance as a

director of macabre cinema.

Universal's resident make-up artist, Jack Pierce, duplicated Karloff's original make-up exactly from the first film and then proceeded to elaborate upon it, showing the ravages of fire and water. For the make-up of the *Bride*, Pierce used a reference point some studies of the Egyptian queen, Nefertiti, turning her regal head-dress into a brilliantly conceived pillar of hair, the sides streaked with gray, giving the semblance of lightning bolts.

The entire build-up of *The Bride of Frankenstein* is something of a *joke*. The film revolves around the gathering of the spare parts for her construction and the creation scene is still one of the most spectacular and lengthy sequences of its type in fantasy cinema. Kenneth Strickfadden created some wonderful electrical machinery and effects for this sequence and collectors of movie trivia should note that some of this very hardware was found by Mel Brooks in a warehouse and used in *Young Frankenstein*.

The big moment finally arrives. *The Bride*, swathed in bandages, is unwrapped and Whale's camera moves in on her beautifully grotesque face in a series of short close-ups. She is introduced to her prospective mate, takes one look at Karloff's pathetic visage and screams in horror.

The sequence is superbly orchestrated by Whale into a veritable symphony of cinematic editing and the scene has never been bettered.

The film opened to good reviews in America, with most critics commenting favourably on the visual style of the film. However, when released in England *The Bride* was greeted with poor reviews, the general attitude being that it merely recreated the original film without making any improvements.

However, the film gave Universal another great success at the box office. It would be four years before the studio would make a further sequel, ending the decade with the last truly great Universal horror film, *Son of Frankenstein*.

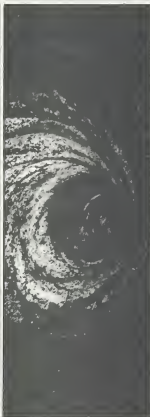
IT'S ONLY A MOVIE

When the noble editor of this illustrious journal informed me that we would, from Starburst 32 onwards, be on sale in the USA my first thought was that now I could expect my quota of abusive letters to be considerably increased. Soon I will no doubt be hearing from angry fans in such exotic places as Nacogdoches, Texas or Three Forks, Montana as well as from my usual critics in more mundane localities like Tunbridge Wells and Bognor Regis...

But perhaps I should explain to our new readers why they may find the letter column peppered, occasionally, with demands for my head on a plate and my heart on a shish kebab. Well, I'll try to explain but I've got to admit I'm still pretty mystified by this phenomenon, myself. I think it may have something to do with some of my comments about recent sf movies. You see... (pauses to take deep breath)... I didn't particularly like *Star Trek*, I positively disliked *The Black Hole*, I found fault with *Allan*... but worst of all I declared I was a little disappointed with *The Empire Strikes Back* (gaspl).

"Well, gee-whizz and tarnation!" I can hear our new American friends muttering (as well as a critic *par excellence* I am also a master of dialects), "If this guy doesn't like science fiction movies what's he doing reviewing them in a magazine like *Starburst*? By jiminy, etc!" But the point is I *do* like science fiction movies! I like them a lot, it's just that I have rather high standards when it comes to the treatment of sf in the cinema and unfortunately these standards are rarely met by most film-makers whose attitude to the genre can best be described as contemptuous.

As that excellent sf writer Harry Harrison said in the Foreword to my book on sf films, *Future Tense*: "When film makers talk about 'science fiction movies' they are really talking about the same old movies they have always made — only tarted up with some of the mechanical trappings of sf... Why will they be bad? Because they will have cobbled-together, derivative plots ground out by screenwriting hacks. These overly familiar stories will be magically transformed into 'sf' by the addition of sf furniture. This does not mean they will be science fiction at all. Dressing an actor in a dentist's smock does not make him a scientist; nor does putting him into a tin suit make him a robot. If the author of the screenplay does not know what a scientist really is or what a robot could possibly be, then the film, no matter how much it looks like science fiction, will not



be science fiction."

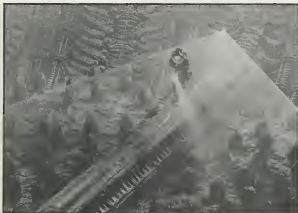
Good science fiction is *harder* to put on the screen than good fantasy or good horror which is why there's so little of it around. With fantasy and horror you can get away with anything, making up the rules as you go along but science fiction calls for a certain amount of intellectual effort and at least some understanding of science — two things that seem scarce among film makers.

One doesn't expect every sf movie to be completely factual in every way — one just wants an indication that the film makers have given some thought to their subject and at least checked a few facts to



provide their backgrounds with a suggestion of authenticity. When old Cecil B. DeMille was making his historical epics, corny as they were, he did at least make sure his people got the background details right. You don't, for example, see any of the ancient Egyptians in *The Ten Commandments* driving around in Cadillacs yet the equivalent bloopers are occurring all the time in the so-called "sf" movies.

My favourite example of how little the average Hollywood script writer knows about even primary school science is a line from a tv movie starring Ray Milland as some crack-pot archeologist who has



a theory that the Incas are descended from the Welsh (or something like that). Trying to explain to one of the other characters why this has never been discovered before he points up at the night sky and says: "See that star? That's Pluto. It's been there in plain view since time immemorial but it was only discovered as recently as 1930..." This not only says a lot for Millard's eyesight (you need a powerful telescope to see Pluto) but rather belittles the monumental efforts of the astronomer, Clyde William Tombaugh, who spent a long time examining countless photographs before finally locating the tiny, elusive object (its

existence had already been predicted mathematically).

The fundamental difference between fantasy and science fiction is that the latter uses science (and it can be any branch of science — not necessarily one of the "hard" sciences) to legitimise what is ostensibly a fantasy situation. The scientific content in sf acts as a kind of umbilical cord between the fantastic and reality and it's this extra dimension that makes science fiction (or rather good science fiction) both unique, as a form of literature, and exciting.

But as Harry Harrison says, most "sf" movies are movies masquerading as

science fiction. There have been very few genuine sf movies in recent years with the exception of *Alien* and one or two others. The monster in *Alien* is basically a creature of the supernatural but one that has been transformed by the methods of sf — the extrapolation from known scientific laws to create something that might conceivably exist — into a possible inhabitant of the real universe. In other words, science fiction was used to put flesh on the nightmare. Unfortunately, *Alien* didn't completely succeed as sf because, as we said back in *Starburst* 14 (and Dan O'Bannon confirmed in issue 19) certain key scenes relating to the nature of the creature were cut out. By removing these scenes, which revealed that the alien was attacking people in order to turn them into living incubators for its eggs, the director destroyed the scientific rationale for its actions. The whole reproductive cycle of the alien, so carefully established earlier and which should have provided a satisfying intellectual symmetry to the story, suddenly came to a confusing end. The tenuous umbilical cord with reality had been cut, with the result the creature might as well have just been a product of the supernatural after all...

But at least *Alien* set out to be a real sf movie — which distinguishes from dress like *Star Trek*, *The Black Hole* and *Meteor*, all so-called "sf" movies but ones made by people who don't give a damn about the genre (I also think all three are bad movies as well as being bad sf movies but that's another story). The situation is different with *Star Wars* and *Empire Strikes Back* (both of which are good movies) as George Lucas has declared, rightly, that they are not science fiction but fantasy movies. But the problem is they look like science fiction movies — they do not come with an attached warning: *This is not a science fiction movie, it just looks like one*, and so to many people they are science fiction movies! I think this is bad for the genre because it means to new generations of fans science fiction is simply *Lord of the Rings* with spaceships...

But enough griping. I think our new readers have got the picture. Now I have to go and feed my piranha fish and get ready for the flood of angry letters from places like Nacogdoches, Texas and Three Forks, Montana.

Next month I will regale you with the story of how I didn't meet Roger Corman recently and what happened the night I got the urgent phone call from Universal Studios.

book world

SF illustrated books continue to appear, though not quite in the profusion of the last couple of years. Indeed, one of the main British publishers of such titles, Pierrot, has recently gone bankrupt in sufficiently spectacular and suspicious fashion to merit several mentions in *Private Eye*. Perhaps that particular boom is nearing its end. Meanwhile the latest item to appear is *Di Fate's Catalog of Science Fiction Hardware* (Sidgwick & Jackson, £8.50 hardcover, £4.50 paperback), by Vincent di Fate and Ian Summers. This is actually an American product, and is an attempted follow-up to possibly the most successful art book (at least in commercial terms) of the last couple of years, *Barlowe's Guide to Extraterrestrials*, by Summers and Wayne Barlowe.

That book, for those of you who never saw it, hit on the good idea of presenting a kind of gallery of famous and bizarre aliens from the pages of science fiction novels. I personally thought the execution wasn't up to the concept — Wayne Barlowe's paintings seemed, frankly, rather crude, although the book was partially rescued for me by a good final section from Barlowe's sketchbook. His drawings had all the verve and style his paintings lacked. Now, packaged very obviously as a follow-up, we have *Di Fate's Catalog*. Again, it's a good idea — a survey of some of the more notable invented technology (spaceships, weapons, space colonies, etc) with Di Fate's paintings accompanied by diagrams and blueprints. But in the event it's even more of a disappointment than its predecessor.

For one thing, most of the paintings are not done especially for the book: they are old magazine or book covers from Di Fate's files. Although he has added paintings for a few obvious omissions, this still means that for the most part the book is a random collation of items Di Fate happened to be commissioned to illustrate in the past, rather than an organized survey of the most memorable SF hardware.

Well, maybe that wouldn't matter so much if the stuff included was really spectacular. But unfortunately it isn't. Di Fate is a competent enough magazine cover artist, but most of the pictures here don't really merit a closer look than you would give them on a magazine. The paintings tend to look flat and static, with none of the excitement and life which Chris Foss, for example, can convey through a spaceship picture.

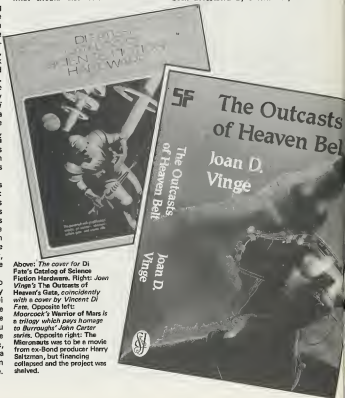
Furthermore, the diagrams and blueprints are very basic and lifeless: little or no imaginative effort seems to have gone into them. It's a well-designed package, and one can foresee it selling quite well, but I suspect many people will pick it up, flip through it, put it down, and never bother to open it again.

(Incidentally, there's one point which puzzles me about this book — and I'd be pleased if any Starburst reader could enlighten me. Di Fate did the pictures. The text was written by one Beth Meacham. The diagrams and blueprints are credited to other artists, and the design was done by someone else again. So what precisely did Ian Summers do to get equal billing with Di Fate on the cover?)

As if to reinforce my point further, what should also arrive from Messrs

Sidgwick and Jackson but the first British edition of Joan Vinge's *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt* (£6.95), which is one of the novels Di Fate illustrates, for no better reason than that he did the cover for its original appearance in *Analog*. This book predates Vinge's *The Snow Queen* (for which I had unkind words a month or two ago) and is, in fact, her first novel, but I much prefer it to the later work.

It's set in the distant Heaven star system, which is generally regarded as a paradise despite the absence of an Earth-type planet. It is rich in raw materials, and has become home to a truly space-faring civilization, its members living luxurious lives in hollowed-out asteroids, or under protective domes on barren planets. Unfortunately, about 90 years before the story starts the system has been devastated by a civil war, and the



Above: The cover for Di Fate's *Catalog of Science Fiction Hardware*. Right: Joan Vinge's *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt*, coincidentally with a cover by Vincent di Fate. Opposite left: Moorcock's *Warrior of Mars* is a trilogy which pays homage to Burroughs' *John Carter* series. Opposite right: *The Micromauts* was to be a movie from ex-Bond producer Henry Seltsman, but financing collapsed and the project was shelved.

survivors now hang precariously to life. With the bulk of their technology destroyed they are unable to rebuild, and lacking an environment on which they can live without advanced technological support they know they are ultimately doomed. The system is divided into three suspicious but, to a degree, mutually reliant factions. The most prosperous, the Damarchy, is a media-dominated democracy situated in an asteroid cluster. The Grand Harmony is a harsh socialist regime centred on the satellites of the Saturn-like planet Discus; it controls some vital raw materials, but its existence is very precarious. Finally Lansing, once capital of the system, supports a few ragged survivors beneath an intact dome. They live as scavengers, raiding the Grand Harmony for raw materials in their disintegrating spaceships.

Into this quite fascinating set-up comes a starship from the planet Morningside in a nearby star system. Morningside is a marginally-inhabitable world, and knowing nothing of what has befallen the Heaven system, its people are anxious to establish trade contracts with their supposedly wealthy neighbours. Instead they arrive to find that the technology of their spaceship represents a possible lifeline to the Heaven system, and the various factions are desperate to get hold of it by any method.

The novel which ensues isn't, unfortunately, as interesting as the situation might lead one to hope. Too much of it is set on the Morningside starship *Ranger*, which seems to spend most of the novel travelling from one part of the Heaven system to the next, never stopping long enough to give us more than a glimpse of

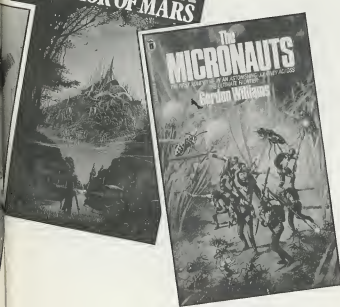
its various societies (the glimpses are interesting enough, to be sure). And there are some patches of rather dull sentiment as various characters develop Significant Relationships with one another. Still, it established Vinge in my mind as an author to watch out for in future, and the disaster (to me) of *The Snow Queen* has done nothing to change my mind about that.

I've had 'flu this last month (who hasn't?), and when I'm feeling ill I tend to look around for a good bit of mindless entertainment to distract me from self-pity. Otherwise I probably wouldn't have bothered to pick up Michael Moorcock's *Warrior of Mars* (NEL, £7.95). Not that I've anything against Moorcock (far from it: at his best he's one of the foremost imaginative writers of our day), but this is an omnibus of the three "Michael Kane" novels — *City of the Beast*, *Lord of the Spiders* and *Masters of the Pit* — originally published in 1965 under the pseudonym "Edward P. Bradbury" (under different titles too — the Moorcock oeuvre is sometimes rather hard to keep straight). They are generally considered to be the dregs of Moorcock's career — after all, by his own admission the entire trilogy was written in a single week — and so I had always steered clear of them.

Rather to my surprise, however, they turn out to be a perfectly decent professional piece of work. Moorcock's extraordinary ability to construct an action story carries him through even when, as here, he is churning out very derivative material at enormous speed. The books are unashamed pastiches of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Martian novels — Michael Kane, the hero, is an Earthman mysteriously transported to a romantic ancient Mars, where he becomes a famous swordsman and wins the beautiful princess, slaying hideous monsters at regular intervals along the way. But I found them as lively as I've always found Burroughs dull, and while I wouldn't for a moment pretend they were anything other than train-journey or sickbed reading — or that they give any real idea of what Moorcock can do — on their own level they are entirely competent.

I couldn't really say the same for Gordon Williams's *The Micronauts* (NEL £1.50), another sickbed effort in which a bunch of people get shrunk for unlikely reasons to insect size, and set off to have a big adventure in someone's garden. It's an old plot, and it has been done much better before.

MICHAEL MOORCOCK WARRIOR OF MARS



TV ZONE

BY TISE VAHIMAGI

Despite my good intentions of trying to stick to some sort of column-content schedule, I'm "pre-empting" the intended Hitch Hiker's Guide piece to make mention of the second-year opener of Buck Rogers in the 25th Century — which was telecast in most regions of the UK during early March.

When the Buck Rogers series premiered on our home-screens last year I said a lot of negative things about it. And despite the elements of fire-and-brimstone I later received regarding my opinion, my thoughts proved themselves: there were indeed very few highlights during the course of the series. However, with the new (American) season of Buck Rogers now under way, my thoughts are starting to take a curve — at least on the strengths of the opening episode, *Time of the Hawk*.

The ITV stations screened it as a two-part episode, whereas it originally went out in the US (on January 15) as a "two-hour season debut." (British television often has the irritating habit of inventing their own "two-part" episodes from American 90 and 120 minutes shows.) However, *Time of the Hawk* introduced a new format and a new lineup for the series — by way of setting the show's base of operations onboard a starship (which is on a U.S.S. Enterprise-like mission) and adding Wilfrid Hyde-White, Jay Garner and Thom Christopher to the roster of regulars. Unfortunately, the dippy little robot character is still around, but noticeably toned down, and another silly robot figure has been added; and this one, laughably, takes on the form of a giant parkknife with all the attachments on display.

The only negative note, for me, aside from the stupid robots, is the inclusion of Wilfrid Hyde-White's Or Goodfellow character. The show doesn't need a doddery, old scientist rambling through its scenery, and Hyde-White's seemingly ad-lib style is not only distracting but gives the impression that he may have wandered onto the wrong film set at Universal City.

What strikes me as a possible plus in the new regular lineup is the Hawk character, a sort of bird-man or man-bird. It may be an old idea to include an alien as part of the continuing storyline (being much in the same vein as Leonard Nimoy's Spock in *Star Trek*) but the visual comic-strip quality and Thom Christopher's ruthless attitude in character is masterful. I am, of course, keeping in mind that the whole structure of Buck Rogers is based on its newspaper comic strip origins. And the Hawk character is, visually, perfectly suited to the show's scene and setting.

It does appear that all this is due to the series' new executive producer, John Mantley. He has re-styled Buck Rogers to a more "serious" level — aiming for drama that deals with people rather than spectacular action. An



approach that is likely to attract more adult viewers and hopefully open up viewer acceptance of the science fiction/comic strip format.

Mantley's credits cover the tv series Gunsmoke and How the West Was Won back to the 1957 sf movie *The 27th Day* (the screenplay based on his own novel). He made his mark on tv in 1964 when he joined the Gunsmoke series as story editor. The following year, Mantley became the show's producer and stayed with it until Gunsmoke saw its last showdown in 1975. He followed on with Gunsmoke's star, James Arness, to producing another western, *How the West Was Won*. Needless to say, Mantley has also been involved in various other tv projects over the years but now that Buck Rogers comes under his banner it may well turn out to be a show to stay tuned to.

Ever since I started this tv column and discussed areas ranging from *The Avengers* to the small-screen work of Harlan Ellison, from *Journey to the Unknown* to *Kojak*: *The Night Stalker*. I've received a flock of mail asking for the addresses of various fan clubs and tv appreciation societies. Although I greatly appreciate the response — and am only too happy to help draw a line of communication between various tv buffs and fan organisations — I also find it a time-consuming activity to personally reply to each request for addresses and tv information.

So, with regard to the more obvious shows and personalities, I list the ones that have received the greatest demand:

The Avengers/Patrick MacNee Fan Network
Heather Firth, Chairperson,
PO Box 1190, Belton, MD, 64012,
U.S.A.

Six of One
The Prisoner Appreciation Society,
PO Box 61, Cheltenham,
Glos. GL52 3JX.

By hearing from various folk about their particular interest, their favourite series, and the various cults, cliques and tv show societies, I have become intrigued with just how many "cult" organisations regarding television there are out there? For instance, the *Wild, Wild West* series hasn't been on the air for some time now — but is there some small group of fanatics, somewhere, still keeping its memory alive? Has *The Outer Limits*, due to its recent revival, spawned any new *Outer Limits* societies? Are there still small pockets of fans grooving over *The Champions*/Man from *UNCLE*/*The Avengers*/Randall and Hopkirk/etc? If there are — and I guess someone is still keeping memories alive and well — let me know.

Note: When writing to any of the fan clubs listed please include a stamped addressed envelope.

THE FANTASTIC BOND MOVIES

JOHN BROSAN LOOKS BACK OVER TWENTY YEARS OF JAMES BOND IN THE MOVIES.



It makes me feel very old when I realize it's nearly two whole decades ago that I saw my first James Bond movie. It was, of course, *Dr No* and I saw it one Saturday afternoon in one of my favourite cinemas in Perth, Western Australia (it was my favourite because it always seemed to be showing off-beat stuff, like sf movies and the few horror films that the Australian censor let through in those days; naturally, when I went back to Perth a few years ago I found the cinema, the Ambassadors, had been torn down).

It struck me at the time that *Dr No* was something out of the ordinary (it was certainly unusual for a British movie) and I guessed that

it and its intended sequels were going to be very popular but if you had told me then that almost twenty years later the James Bond movies would still be rolling off the assembly line, as popular as ever, I'd have been more than a little incredulous. Yet it's true — June this year sees the release of the twelfth Bond film (thirteenth if you count *Casino Royale* but who wants to?), *For Your Eyes Only*.

In the next issue I'll be discussing this film and talking to its director John Glen but first I want to take a trip down memory lane and look at the Bond series as a whole...

The decision to use *Dr No* as the alternative choice for the first Bond movie was to have

important ramifications for the rest of the series for it was, along with *Moonraker*, Fleming's most overtly science fictional work and it was this aspect that later came to dominate the Bond movies.

When I first saw *Dr No* I was reminded a little of Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, mainly because *Dr No* seemed to have much in common with Captain Nemo — both have an obsession with the sea, both have set up private kingdoms from where they can wage war on mankind (though Nemo has his submarine as well as his island) and they even have similar names (Nemo meaning 'no one' in Latin). The impression that part of the

inspiration for *Dr No* came from 20,000 Leagues was reinforced when I came to read the novel and found that Fleming had even included a giant squid in the story (though it didn't appear in the film). Of course the other main inspiration for the character of *Dr No* was Fu Manchu, as Fleming had been a great fan of Sax Rohmer's arch villain when a boy.

The film version of *Dr No* emphasized the science fiction element by concentrating on the futuristic technology. *Dr No*'s rocket "toppling" beam was now powered by an atomic reactor which gave the makers the opportunity to provide the good Doctor with a spectacular underground complex filled with flashing lights and swarms of extras. Designed by Ken Adam, this sort of set was to become the trademark of the later Bonds, getting bigger and more spectacular with each film until they dwarfed everything else, including Bond himself. Significantly, when the makers ran out of ideas for Bond it was the plot of *Dr No* they returned to again and again. In effect, *Dr No* became the template for the Bond series...

But not immediately. From *Russia With Love*, for instance, bore little resemblance to *Dr No* and was fairly faithful to the original novel apart from the inclusion of SPECTRE which added an extra level of duplicity to all the double and triple crossing that the story revolves around. The futuristic technology of

From Russia With Love was the film that started the trend in gadgetry that was to weigh Bond down increasingly in subsequent screen adventures.

Dr No was conspicuous by its absence and the McGuffin had been reduced from rocket toppling to the stealing of a mere cipher machine. However this was the movie that started the trend in gadgetry that was to weigh Bond down increasingly in the subsequent screen adventures. In *From Russia With Love* it's simply a briefcase containing a folding rifle, knife, tear gas bomb and gold coins but from this small beginning the gadgetry turned into mini-helicopters and submersible cars.

The next movie, *Goldfinger* (my own favourite) saw the return of the future technology and also Ken Adam's futuristic sets (he didn't work on *From Russia With Love*), the most spectacular of which was the fantasy interior of Fort Knox—a huge, glittering vault piled high with stacks of gold bars (if you stacked real gold that high the gold at the bottom of the pile would go soft from the weight). *Goldfinger*'s main weapon is an unlikely-looking laser gun with which he almost bisects James Bond then uses it to cut his way into Fort Knox in order to leave a "dirty" nuclear device inside—his intention being to destroy America's gold reserves and thus increase the value of his own gold. This is a more logical plan than the one in the novel which involved *Goldfinger* actually trying to steal the gold from Fort Knox—an exercise in

logistics that bordered on the impossible, as critics at the time pointed out.

If *Goldfinger* represents the peak of the Bond movies then *Thunderball* is the start of the decline. After the concise and economical narrative pace of *Goldfinger* the film version of *Thunderball* seems a sprawling, uncontrolled mess by comparison. There's just too much of everything in this movie. The basic plot, which involves SPECTRE hijacking a NATO bomber and its two H-bombs and holding the world to ransom—is a good one but it gets swamped under all the extra bits of business that the

makers threw in simply because they now had a big enough budget to indulge themselves. *Thunderball* was the first of the Bonds to feature set-pieces that didn't really progress the plot but existed as almost self-contained spectacles. As a result the film's pace flags drastically in certain places and overall it seems much too long (even after some scenes were cut it ran 125 minutes to *Goldfinger*'s 109). Still, it remains a much more entertaining and original film than most of the subsequent Bonds and proved to be one of the most financially successful movies of all time.



The first person to play James Bond wasn't Sean Connery but American actor Barry Nelson. This was way back in 1955 in a CBS television production of *Casino Royale*. A segment of the *Climax Mystery Theatre* series it also starred Peter Lorre as the villain Le Chiffre but it didn't seem to make any impression with viewers at the time and was quickly forgotten (and as far as I know the show was transmitted live so no record of it exists).

The person most disappointed by this damp squib of a beginning for Bond's screen career was his creator Ian Fleming. From the start Fleming had high hopes for Bond as a tv or movie goldmine and only the year before CBS production, in 1954, three different film

companies had shown interest in buying the film rights to *Casino Royale* while the famous Hungarian producer Sir Alexander Korda had asked to see an advance copy of Fleming's second novel *Live and Let Die*. But all of this interest came to nothing and it was not until eight years later that the first Bond movie came to be made. In the meantime Fleming had got involved with an abortive project to put Bond on the screen that is still having repercussions today...

It happened this way: back in 1958 Fleming got together with a young film-maker called Kevin McClory and they wrote, with the assistance of veteran scriptwriter Jack Whittingham, an original screenplay for a Bond movie which they tentatively titled

The next Bond, *You Only Live Twice*, signposted the direction the series was to take in future. As script writer Richard Maibaum put it: "By *Goldfinger* we were getting wilder. The whole business was becoming larger than life. Then in *Thunderball* it became even more so. The production became enormous, more fantastical, almost comic strip. Since then there's no way of bringing them down." But the problem was that novel of *You Only Live Twice* didn't offer much that could be turned into a big scale visual extravaganza. On the contrary, it was a somewhat small-scale, sombre

story about a melancholic James Bond trying to recover from the death of his wife while on a minor mission to Japan. By the sheerest of coincidences he encounters his wife's murderer, Blofeld (of course), who is also feeling old and bored and has retired to Japan to amuse himself with a bizarre Garden of Death where the locals can commit suicide in a wide variety of off-beat ways. The book ends with Bond avenging his wife by killing Blofeld but losing his memory during the battle... M presumes he has been killed and the Times prints his obituary.

The producers solved the problem by

throwing out practically everything in the novel and keeping only the Japanese locale. For a plot they returned to *Dr No* for inspiration, with the result that *You Only Live Twice* is *Dr No* writ large. Once again something strange is happening to American spacecraft but this time they're not simply being knocked off-course but swallowed whole by a mystery rocket operated by SPECTRE. Bond again tracks the villain to his lair but this lair isn't just an underground laboratory but an entire hollowed-out volcano, courtesy of Ken Adam again.

You Only Live Twice is spectacular enough but not very exciting. Everything had got so big it was difficult to become involved in either the characters or what was going on. With this movie the last links with any sort of reality were severed and Bond entered the realm of pure fantasy. It was like watching a live *Fox* and *Jerry* cartoon...

Even the long-awaited confrontation between Bond and Blofeld lacked sparks, despite a lively performance by Donald Pleasence as Blofeld. Of course Bond was no longer out to avenge his wife's death because, as far as the movies were concerned, it hadn't yet happened (the producers had planned to make *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* first but changed their plans when Connery announced he would only appear in one more Bond).

Reversing the sequence of the books the

Unfortunately, On Her Majesty's Secret Service was undermined by the fatal mis-casting of George Lazenby as James Bond, a bizarre choice.

next Bond was *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* but for some curious reason, though they'd met in the previous film, Bond and Blofeld don't recognise each other. Actually DHMSS was a brave attempt to bring the series back down to a more human scale and it followed the plot of the novel pretty closely. It still had a science fictional theme, with Blofeld planning to unleash germ warfare onto the world from his Alpine headquarters, but it was nowhere near as far-fetched as *You Only Live Twice*. Unfortunately it was ill undermined by the fatal mis-casting of George Lazenby as Bond, a bizarre choice that will remain One of the Great Mysteries of the Cinema (however the action sequences, directed by John Glen, still look superb).

Sean Connery returned for the next one, *Diamonds Are Forever*, but even he wasn't able to save the movie which was a throwback in style to *You Only Live Twice* and had an incredibly confused and shambling storyline. The diamond smuggling plot of the novel was clumsily grafted onto yet another of Blofeld's schemes to hold the world to ransom, this time using a laser mounted on a satellite.

The space age element was absent from *Live and Let Die*, the first of the Roger Moore Bonds, but again it had little to do with the original novel. As with *Diamonds* the plot had



Opposite top: The British quad poster for the second in the Bond series, *From Russia With Love* (1963). Opposite below: James Bond (Sean Connery) crashes into critics in *Thunderball* (1965), third in the series. Top: Bond surfaces after a short underwater swim, made possible by his ex-purse, handy-dandy miniature equalling *Thunderball*. Above: James Bond (Roger Moore) takes on the supernatural might of Baron Samedi in *Live and Let Die* (1973).

James Bond, *Secret Agent*. Two years later, when the project had apparently fizzled out, Fleming made his annual trip to his home in Jamaica to write another Bond novel. Unfortunately it seems that he used the *Secret Agent* screen treatment as the basis for the novel, which he called *Thunderball*.

When the novel was published in 1961 a legal battle began which lasted until 1963 when McClary was assigned all the film and tv rights to *Thunderball*, but by then two other producers, Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman, had joined forces and bought the rights to all the James Bond novels (with the exception of *Casino Royale*, but that's another story...)

Originally Broccoli and Saltzman had also

planned to film *Thunderball* first but when it became obvious that the legal wrangle was going to tie up that property for some time they switched to *Dr No* instead. According to McClary this is why *Dr No* in the movie is a member of SPECTRE (in the novel he was a freelance operator), the organisation that made its first appearance in *Thunderball*. This is also the reason why you haven't seen either SPECTRE or the chief villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld in any of the Bonds since *Diamonds Are Forever* as both were points of contention in yet another legal battle that began when McClary announced his plans to remake *Thunderball* a few years ago (it was to have been called *Warhead*). It now looks as if it will never be made...



Top: Behind the scenes on *You Only Live Twice* (1967). Sean Connery is coaxed on the finer points of Kendo. Above: *Scaramanga* (Roger Moore) and James Bond (Sean Connery) begin their duel to the death in *The Man With the Golden Gun*. Right: The plans for the submersible car from *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). Above: "Q" (Desmond Llewellyn) instructs Bond in the workings of the car. Opposite: A stunning piece of trick driving from *The Man With the Golden Gun*.



to twist itself into knots to accommodate the action set-pieces and didn't make much sense. There was also an extra emphasis on broad, slapstick humour — mainly represented by the redneck lawman Sheriff Pepper (Clifton James) — that was to prove a forerunner of worse to come.

Sheriff Pepper popped up again in *The Man With the Golden Gun*, a film that concentrated more on laughs than any of the previous Bonds (the comic highpoint came when Pepper was pushed into a river by a baby elephant). Of all the Bonds this one is probably the least memorable without even a major action set-piece (like the boat chase in *Live and Let Die*) to fix it in the memory. Ironical that it was directed by Guy Hamilton, the man who directed *Goldfinger*.

Realizing the series needed a shot in the arm the one remaining producer, Broccoli (Saltzman had sold his share of Bond by then), decided to make the next one, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, a real blockbuster. As the plot of the novel didn't lend itself to such a treatment (and Fleming had anyway stipulated that it should never be filmed) Broccoli and his writers simply rewrote the film version of *You Only Live Twice*. Instead of spacecraft being swallowed up by the villain's mystery machine it was nuclear submarines, and instead of a hellbored volcano the villain was using the interior of a super-

Moonraker was the most science fictional, lavish and absurd Bond of all. It's a pity it went the way it did because the original novel would still make a good Bond movie, even today.

tanker as his base of operations but the design was remarkably similar, even down to the control room with its steel shutters.

But despite all the similarities *The Spy Who Loved Me* works much better than *You Only Live Twice* and is surprisingly entertaining. The special effects in particular are very impressive, as are the second unit sequences (Spy marked the return to the series of John Glen). However with this film the series did take another step into the realm of pure absurdity, mainly with the character of Jaws (Richard Kiel). He provided some good visual jokes but it was a mistake to make him completely indestructible. You can't have two indestructible characters in a Bond movie (Bond himself is the other one) otherwise you remove all sense of reality (not that there was much reality left in the series by that time).

As *The Spy* proved a big hit with audiences Broccoli decided to repeat the formulae with *Moonraker* and the result was the most science fictional, lavish and absurd Bond of all. It's a pity it went the way it did because the original novel would still make a good Bond movie even today. The plot is certainly big-scale enough, involving a scheme by Sir Hugo Drax to obliterate London with a nuclear missile but Broccoli and his people didn't agree, saying that it was much too dated a story (call me old fashioned

but the nuclear destruction of London seems unpleasantly topical).

Moonraker looks marvellous — Ken Adam's sets are more mind-boggling than ever and the special effects by Derek Meddings are brilliant but overall it's something of a dud, the best moments coming in John Glen's pre-credits sequence. Its biggest fault is the reliance on slapstick humour to provide the entertainment, added to the decision to turn Jaws into a sympathetic character which just made him seem even more absurd.

It was a financial success but apparently not as big a success as Broccoli had hoped because he then decided to make an abrupt change of direction with the series. With the next Bond, **For Your Eyes Only**, he and his writers returned to Fleming's actual work to provide the source material. As the original book was a collection of short stories it wasn't possible to film it as is but the plots and characters from two of the stories, *For Your Eyes Only* and *Riocha* have been interwoven together. The latter story concerns Bond investigating a heroin-smuggling ring in Greece and getting mixed up with two Greek gangsters, Colombo and Kristatos, one of whom turns out to be a sympathetic character while the other one is the true villain (in the movie Colombo is played by Topol and Kristatos by Julian Glover — guess which one is the real villain).



According to director John Glen **For Your Eyes Only** is a return in style to **From Russia With Love**. Ken Adam's lavish sets are again absent, along with all the space age paraphernalia of **Moonraker**.

The former story is about a girl, Judy Havelock, out to avenge the murder of her parents by a Cuban gangster. Bond has also been sent to eliminate the man (the Havelocks have been old friends of M) and the two of them are obliged to join forces to get their target. In the movie Judy becomes Melina Havelock and is played by the beautiful Carole Bouquet. She is still out to avenge her parents though the identity of her target has changed. Linking these two plots is an added thread concerning a sunken British spy ship containing a vital secret transmitter that must be kept out of the hands of the Russians.

According to director John Glen **For Your Eyes Only** is a return in style to **From Russia With Love**. Ken Adam's lavish sets are again absent, along with all the space age paraphernalia of **Moonraker** (though there is an underwater battle involving futuristic submarines), and, most reassuring of all, Jaws won't be popping up either.

It remains to be seen if the movie really will be similar to **From Russia With Love** (I have my doubts), and if it is it will be interesting to see how the new, younger generation of Bond fans react to such a drastic change of pace after **Moonraker**.

But more on this, as well as a look at the making of **For Your Eyes Only**, next month ...

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